



# THE LIBERTY "BOYS OF '76"

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## THE LIBERTY BOYS AT SARATOGA; OR, THE SURRENDER OF BURGOYNE.

BY HARRY MOORE.



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## The Liberty Boys at Saratoga;

OR,

## THE SURRENDER OF BURGoyNE.

By **HARRY MOORE.**

### CHAPTER I.

#### DICK AND BOB.

"I hear the redcoats are robbing and pillaging right and left over across the river, Dick."

"So I have understood, Bob."

"It makes my blood boil to think of how they plunder the patriots, Dick."

"It is enough to make one's blood boil, Bob."

"Say, Dick."

"Well?"

"We are here on the west side of the river, and the British are on the east side."

"Yes."

"With the river between us we can do nothing."

"You are right."

"Well, then, let's go across the river."

Dick Slater, the handsome young captain of the company of youths known as "The Liberty Boys of '76," laughed.

"That is just like you, Bob," he said. "If the enemy won't come to you, you are always in for going to the enemy."

"Yes, and for going at the enemy, after we have gone to it," with a grin.

"That's true, too. But what could we do over there, Bob?"

"Lots."

"Well, what, for instance?"

"Couldn't we put a stop to the robbing and plundering of the patriots by the redcoats?"

"We might, Bob, to a certain extent."

"Then let's go over and try!"

"But think a moment, old man; the entire British army is encamped over there."

"What do we care for the British army?" cried Bob, who was inclined to be a bit reckless. "We can make it so lively for the redcoats, and keep them so busy, that they won't have time to attack us."

Dick Slater smiled. "I don't know so well about that, Bob," he said. "There are so many of the British that we would find it an impossibility to keep them all busy."

"Well, anyhow, we could have some fun, and something to do, and that will beat sitting around in camp, over here."

"Yes, that is true enough."

"And then, you know we had a good time when we were over there before."

"Yes, so we did."

"The thrashings we gave the different parties of redcoats we came in contact with ought to have taught them a lesson, and caused them to stop plundering and pillaging the patriots, Dick."

"It ought to have done so, Bob, but it did not."

"We captured more than one hundred prisoners when we were over there, old man. Let's go back and repeat the operation."

"I'm afraid we might not be able to do so, Bob."

"We can try, at any rate."

"So we can. Well, I'll tell you what I'll do."

"What?"

"I'll leave it to a vote of the boys."

"All right," exclaimed Bob Estabrook. "That will suit me, and the matter is as good as settled now, I know, for the boys will all be in favor of going across."



Dick Slater and Bob Estabrook were great friends. They had lived neighbors down in Westchester County, near Tarrytown, and when the Declaration of Independence was signed Dick had organized a company of youths of about his own age, and of course Bob was the first one to enroll his name. They were now with General Gates' Army of the North, which was watching General Burgoyne.

The patriot army was on the west side of the river, stretching along its shore several miles, and the British were on the east shore, their encampment stretching along for a distance of fifteen miles. The southern end of the patriot lines was at Bemis Heights, just across the river from Saratoga.

Ten days before the time of which we now write, Dick Slater and his "Liberty Boys" had crossed the Hudson, and done some good work, ending with capturing one hundred British soldiers, and bringing them across to the patriot encampment in triumph.

They had been complimented highly on this achievement, and now Bob was eager to go back and try it again.

Dick and Bob had been standing down on the shore of the Hudson, talking. It was a fine afternoon in the first half of the month of September, and the river and trees were beautiful to look upon. It was such weather as made life a joy to those lively, jolly fellows who constituted the company of "Liberty Boys."

The two youths turned away, and made their way back up toward the point where they had their quarters.

"I'm a bit afraid that the general won't let us go back over the river, even if the boys vote to do so, Bob," said Dick, as they walked along.

"Why not, Dick?"

"Well, he may be afraid that the redcoats will be on the lookout for us, and gobble us up."

"Perhaps so. I hope not."

"Well, we will see what the boys have to say about the matter first, and then, if they decide that they would like to go back across the river I will go and see General Gates, and ask him to let us do so."

"I rather think he will be willing, Dick."

"What makes you think that?"

"Why, you see, if we are over there we can keep watch of the enemy, and if it tries any tricks we may be able to discover what is to be done, and get information to the general in time to enable him to spoil the redcoats' game."

"True."

"I know one fellow who will be in for going back across the river, Dick," said Bob, with a grin, as they were approaching their quarters.

"Who?"

"Joe Hunter."

Dick smiled.

"I guess you are right."

"Yes; he's head over ears in love with Bessie Folger, you know."

"I know. She's a sweet girl, Bob."

"One of the sweetest I have ever known, old man."

"She can't quite come up to your sister Alice, Bob."

"No; nor to your sister Edith."

Bob's sister, Alice, was Dick's sweetheart, and Dick's sister, Edith, was Bob's sweetheart, so this was an added bond of sympathy between the two.

They were soon among the company of "Liberty Boys," and Dick lost no time in putting the matter before them.

After he had stated the case he said:

"Now, all in favor of going over across the river again and trying to make things lively for the redcoats raise their hands."

Every hand went up, and some of the youths raised both hands.

"I guess that settles it, Dick," grinned Bob, who was delighted. "It seems to be a unanimous vote."

"Yes. Well, I will go and have a talk with General Gates, and ask permission to go across the river."

"Make him give us permission, Dick!"

"Yes, yes!"

"Don't take 'no' for an answer."

"Tell him we're going, anyhow."

Such were a few of the exclamations.

"I'll do my best to persuade him to let us go, boys," said Dick, "and I rather think that he will do so."

"Of course he will!"

"Yes, yes!"

"He must let us go!"

"He'll do it. We'll be cleaning up our weapons while you are gone, and getting ready, Dick."

"Yes, you can do that," said Dick. "It won't hurt the weapons to be cleaned anyway, even if he doesn't let us go."

Then Dick went to headquarters, and told the orderly he wanted an interview with General Gates.

It happened that the general was not engaged, just then, and Dick was shown into the officer's room at once.

"Ah, Dick; I'm glad to see you," he greeted. "Sit down."

The "Liberty Boy" took a seat.

"Now, then," remarked the general. "What can I do for you, Dick?"

"I have come to ask a favor, sir."

"What is it, my boy?"

"We fellows have been talking the matter over among ourselves, sir, and we wish to be allowed to go across the river, again, and make things lively for the British."

General Gates looked sober.

He gazed thoughtfully at the floor, and seemed to be pondering the matter.

Then he said:

"Do you not think it would be an extremely hazardous thing to do, Dick?"

"I don't think so, sir."

"Remember what a stir you caused among the ranks of



the enemy a week or so ago, when you brought more than one hundred British soldiers across the river, prisoners."

"I remember it, sir."

"Well, don't you think they will be on the lookout, and in all probability capture you if you venture back there?"

"I hardly think so."

The general was silent for a few moments.

"I scarcely know what to say, Dick," he said, presently.

"I would be only too glad to grant you permission to go if I thought it would not be too hazardous, for if you were over there you would be able to keep a close watch on the enemy, and report any move which they might attempt to make. But I would not like to let you go into great danger, even though we might benefit some as a result. I don't want that you or your 'Liberty Boys' shall be killed or captured, Dick."

"We will be very careful, sir, and will take the best of care of ourselves. I feel sure that we can keep out of the hands of the British; and as you say, we may be able to do a great deal of good through keeping a watch on the enemy and reporting any move which they may attempt to make."

"Are there any good hiding-places over there, my boy, where you can retire to if close-pressed?"

"Yes, there is one that I know of, sir. It is an old mill, deep in the timber, in a dark, narrow ravine, where it would only be discovered by the enemy as the result of chance."

"How did you discover it?"

"We did not. We were shown the way to it by an old man—a genuine old hermit by the name of Harmod, who befriended us when we were over there before."

"Ah, well, I am more than half inclined to let you boys go back across the river, Dick."

"Oh, do so, sir!"

"Very well. I will give my consent; but, Dick, you must make it a point to keep as close a watch as possible on the enemy, and if you discover anything that you think is of interest or importance, send a messenger to me with the news."

"I will do so, sir."

"Very well. Then you may go across the river."

"Thank you, sir. The boys will be delighted."

"Be careful, Dick. Don't let the redcoats capture you."

"We will be careful."

Then Dick bade the general good-afternoon, saluted, and withdrew.

He hastened back to the "Liberty Boys' " quarters, and told them the good news.

"Did he give his consent?"

"Tell us quick."

Thus was Dick greeted when he appeared among his comrades.

They were eager to hear what General Gates had said.

"It's all right, boys," said Dick. "We are to go."

"Hurrah!" cried Bob Estabrook, and the others echoed his cry.

"We'll make the redcoats behave themselves when we get back across the river!"

"That we will!"

"Yes. We'll put a stop to their plundering and pillaging."

"We will see to it that the redcoats don't rob the patriot families as much as they have been doing."

The youths were delighted, and asked more questions in a minute than Dick could have answered in an hour.

"When will we go, Dick?" asked Bob, finally, when the talk had in a measure subsided.

"To-night, Bob."

"Good!"

"We will wait till near midnight, so as to make sure that there will be none of the enemy abroad on the other side of the river, and then we will cross and make our way to the old mill, where we had our quarters the other time we were over there."

"I wonder if we will find the old hermit, Harmod, there?"

"I don't know. Likely we shall, though."

"I hope so. I took a liking to the old fellow."

"So did I."

The youths went ahead with their work, and made their preparations. They cleaned up their muskets and pistols, and laid in a supply of ammunition.

Some of the other soldiers, seeing the youths so busily engaged, came and made inquiries regarding the meaning of it, and were told that the youths were going to go across the river again.

"You boys will all be killed or captured," said one of the soldiers.

"I guess not," said Dick, with a smile.

"I'll wager you will."

"You would lose your wager," said Bob Estabrook.

"We don't intend that the redcoats shall get the better of us in any way, shape, or form."

"But they may do it in spite of you."

"We'll risk it."

It was soon known throughout the encampment—the fact that the "Liberty Boys" were going back across the river to try to make things lively for the British—and there were many who shook their heads.

"Those young fellows are too daring and reckless," said one. "They should be more careful, and not take such chances."

"Well, they have taken chances lots of times, and have always managed to get through in pretty good shape,"

## CHAPTER II.

### AT THE OLD MILL.

"What did he say, Dick?"

"Are we to go?"



said another, who seemed to have great confidence in the youths.

"That's true; but the pitcher that goes too often to the well is sure to be broken."

Little did the "Liberty Boys" care how many somber predictions were made regarding their fate if they went across the Hudson. They were young and full of life and spirits, and danger had no terrors for them. Indeed, it heightened the interest, and made them the more eager to do a thing. If there was no danger in a project they had no wish to attempt it. They could endure anything, save tameness.

The "Liberty Boys" remained quietly in camp till ten o'clock that night, and then they marched away, toward the south, along the shore of the Hudson.

A mile below the extreme southernmost end of the patriot encampment were three boats, which were claimed by the "Liberty Boys." It was in these boats they had crossed the river before, and they purposed crossing in them now.

It was half-past eleven when the first trip across the river was made, and it was half-past twelve when the last one was made.

The "Liberty Boys" drew the boats quite a ways up a small creek, and hid them in the underbrush beside the stream. It would not do to have the boats found by the British, for then the youths would have no way of getting back across the river, and would be in a bad box indeed.

This done, the "Liberty Boys" marched away, in the direction of the old mill.

It was two miles to this old mill, and the youths marched slowly, for they were not at all certain they would not encounter a scouting party of redcoats.

They were ready to make it lively for the enemy, however, in case this occurred.

Nothing of the kind happened, however.

All was quiet, and they did not hear or see anything of the British.

At the end of an hour's march they reached the old mill.

All was still, and it seemed that it might be that no living person had been in the deep, dark ravine for months. The "Liberty Boys" had been there only ten days before, however, and so they were not deceived by the stillness and somberness of the scene.

Fearing that the British might have discovered the old mill and stationed a force there, the youths advanced very slowly and cautiously.

Closer and closer to the old ruined building they drew, and still all was quiet.

If there was a force of British there, and they had a sentinel stationed, he must surely be asleep, the "Liberty Boys" reasoned.

There was no one on duty, however.

The "Liberty Boys" reached the door of the old mill, and found this to be the case.

All was still, and the youths feared they would find the

mill untenanted. They had hoped they would find the old hermit, Harmod, for he was so well acquainted with the lay of the land in these parts that he could be of inestimable value to them in case they should be hard pressed by the British.

Dick opened the door, which was not fastened, though closed, and entered the mill, the other youths following.

Scarcely had they entered before there was a slight rustling sound, and a voice which they recognized as being that of Harmod, called out:

"Who is there?"

"It is I, Dick Slater, Harmod," the youth replied.

"What, Dick Slater!" in tones of joy and delight.

"Yes, and Bob Estabrook, and all the rest of the boys."

"All the 'Liberty Boys,' Mr. Slater?"

"Yes; the entire force, just as it was when we were here before."

"Come in, all, and close the door," the old hermit said, "and then I will strike a light."

The youths obeyed, and the old man soon had a candle burning.

Then he gave the youths a hearty greeting.

"I am very, very glad to see you again," he said, earnestly, "but at the same time," with a sober look and a shake of the head, "I think you are taking great chances in coming over here, after what you did when you were here before."

"I suppose so," said Dick. "I judge that the British do not have much love for us."

"You are right, they do not. It would give them more pleasure than anything else in the world could do, I am sure, if they could succeed in capturing you young men."

"Well, we will have to see to it that they do not catch us."

"Yes; you will have to be on your guard."

"Have you seen any of the British around here since we went away?"

The old hermit shook his head.

"No," he said.

"Do you think that they have not as yet discovered the presence of the old mill?"

"That is what I think. You see, you carried away, prisoners, the only men who knew of the existence of the mill, and none of the others have happened to stumble upon it."

"Then it will be a reasonably safe place for us to take up our quarters, don't you think?"

"Yes; if you are careful to always have sentinels stationed, I think it will be safe enough here for you."

Then Dick sent out for four of the youths to stand guard, and the others settled down to take it easy. They spread their blankets on the floor, and lay down. Many were soon asleep. Among those who remained awake were Dick Slater and the old hermit, Harmod, and they talked for an hour or more, Dick questioning the old man, and securing all the information possible.



Having exhausted the subject, they, too, lay down and went to sleep.

All were up bright and early next morning, and breakfast was prepared and eaten. The old hermit had a lot of provisions on hand, so the "Liberty Boys" would fare well so long as they were at the old mill.

Dick decided to remain in the old mill till about noon, and map out his plans for making trouble for the redcoats. Learning that this was what was to be done, Joe Hunter, who was in love with sweet Bessie Folger, whose parents lived about a mile and a half from the old mill, asked permission from Dick to visit the Folger home and see his sweetheart.

"That's all right, Joe; go right along," said Dick, who was always glad to favor his boys in such matters; "but be careful. Don't let the redcoats see you if you can help it, and above all things, don't let them capture you."

"I'll be careful, Dick; they won't catch me napping."

"See to it that they don't, Joe."

"I will," and then he took his departure, a happy look of anticipation on his face.

"Jove, but won't Bessie be surprised and pleased when she sees me, though!" he said to himself. "She'll be alarmed, too, though, for fear I may fall into the hands of the British."

### CHAPTER III.

#### BESSIE AS A MESSENGER.

"Oh, Mr. Slater!"

It was about ten o'clock, and the door of the mill had been suddenly opened, and a beautiful girl of perhaps seventeen years had dashed into the room. She was panting, and almost exhausted, and had evidently been running far and fast.

Dick Slater leaped up, exclaiming as he did so:

"It's Miss Folger!"

"Yes, Mr. Slater, and I—and——"

The girl was so exhausted that she could not articulate, and she was forced to pause and gasp for breath.

"Sit down, Miss Bessie," said Dick, and the girl obeyed.

"Now, tell me what the trouble is; take it easy. Did not Joe come to your house this morning?"

The girl nodded, and said, slowly and with difficulty:

"Yes—he—is—there—now."

The "Liberty Boys" were gathered around the girl, listening with interest, looks of wonder on their faces. They could not understand the matter at all. They could not think why, if Joe was at her home, the girl should be here in the old mill. The only possible explanation was that something had happened, and Dick asked this question.

"Yes, something—has—happened," the girl said.

"The—British—are there—and they—have the house—surrounded!"

"Ha! so that is what has occurred, eh?" cried Dick. "I suppose they are going to try to make Joe a prisoner?"

"Yes; and they are going to take everything of value that we have, and even threatened to burn the house," said Bessie, who had now recovered her breath to such an extent as to permit of her speaking coherently and continuously.

"Oh, it is a foraging party of redcoats, eh?"

"Yes, yes!"

"How many are there in the party?"

"About a dozen, Mr. Slater."

"Then they didn't know Joe was there till they got there. It was not him, especially, that they were after, eh?"

"No, sir; you see, they know father is a patriot, and I suppose they had decided to come and take everything we have that is worth taking."

"And Joe sent you here?"

"Yes; he said that he and father could hold the redcoats at bay till you got there, and—oh, dear! here we are wasting time, when it is necessary that we should be hastening to the rescue of Joe—of father and Joe."

"We will be off at once," said Dick. "Twenty of you boys come along with me. You had better remain here till we have gone to your home and settled with the redcoats, Miss Bessie."

"No, no. I will accompany you."

"Let all of us go, Dick," said Bob.

"All right; come along, then, everybody. We mustn't let any grass grow under our feet. A dozen against two is big odds, and Mr. Folger and Joe may be overpowered before we get there, if we don't hurry."

"You lead, and set the pace, Dick," cried Mark Morrison, "and we'll keep right along with you if we can do so."

"All right; away we go. Miss Bessie, you had better take it slow and easy."

"I will get along all right, Mr. Slater," with a smile.

Then Dick and his "Liberty Boys" dashed out of the old mill and away through the timber, at the top of their speed, and after them came Bessie Folger.

The girl was a healthy country maiden, and although she had run almost the whole of the distance from her father's house to the old mill, she had quickly regained her strength, and was as fresh and strong as ever. The result was that while she could not quite keep pace with the "Liberty Boys," she held her own remarkably well, and did not fall behind very fast.

She was still where she could see the youths when they paused at the edge of the timber, a quarter of a mile from the farmhouse.

The youths had heard the crack, crack, crack! of fire-arms as they drew near the farmhouse, and now they saw that the farmer and the "Liberty Boy," Joe Hunter, were holding the fort, as it were. They were firing at the redcoats at intervals, and holding them back from making a charge.



The youths paused but a few moments, and then, seeing the British force had not been made larger by new arrivals, they darted forth from among the trees and dashed toward the house.

They did not make any noise, as they wished to get close enough to fire upon the enemy before being seen, if possible.

They were seen before they were quite within firing distance, however, and with startled yells the redcoats turned and fled at the top of their speed.

"After them!" cried Dick. "We must give them a taste of cold lead!"

With wild yells the "Liberty Boys" dashed after the redcoats.

Had it not been that they had already ran a mile and a half they would no doubt have caught up with the British without difficulty; but the youths were already somewhat winded, and so the best they seemed able to do was to hold their own.

The redcoats saw they were in a trap, and fear lent them wings; they ran very swiftly for British soldiers, who were not, as a rule, very swift-footed.

Up the road they went, and after them went the "Liberty Boys."

It was an exciting spectacle, and if the youths could get close enough to use their muskets effectively it would become even more exciting.

The difficulty was in getting within shooting distance, however. One mile was gone over, and the distance remained about the same between pursued and pursuers.

"Jove, I wouldn't have believed that redcoats could run so fast!" said Mark Morrison, who was well up toward the front.

"Get them scared bad enough, and they can run, all right," said Bob Estabrook, in reply, he being close to Mark.

"I guess you are right; and they must be terribly frightened this time."

"Yes, they're about as badly frightened as ever men get to be."

Still the race went on.

The British saw they were holding their own, and as long as they could do this they preferred to keep in the road, and did so. If they had seen that their pursuers were gaining on them they would have taken to the timber, to avoid being shot down.

Presently they reached a hill, and ran up it as rapidly as possible, and disappeared over the top.

After them went the "Liberty Boys," and when the youths arrived at the top, and started to go down the other side, they met with a surprise.

The party of fleeing redcoats had met another party, and had come to a stop halfway down the hill. The other party consisted of more than one hundred men, and it was evident that they considered themselves strong enough to withstand the party of "rebels," for they were standing

their ground, and held their muskets ready for instant use.

"Halt!" cried Dick.

The "Liberty Boys" came to a stop instantly.

"Hello, what have we run against now?" exclaimed Bob.

"Another band of redcoats, Bob," said Dick.

"Yes, and a pretty strong one, too," from Mark Morrison.

"There are not more than twenty more than we have," said Bob. "Let's charge them, Dick."

Bob was always eager to get into a fight. Whenever he got his eyes on the enemy, he was ill at ease till he could get close enough to get his hands on them as well.

But Dick was more cautious. Dick was just as daring, and just as desperate a fighter, when the necessity arose, but he was very careful, and never rushed into anything. He did not believe in killing and being killed about equally. Unless he saw a chance to get far the better of an engagement, he made it a plan to avoid it, and wait for a more favorable opportunity.

"I don't believe it would be good policy to charge them, Bob," he said.

"Why not? We can scatter them, all right."

"Yes, but before we could get within striking distance they would pour two or three volleys into us, and the result would be that fifteen or twenty of our number would be killed and wounded."

"I guess that's true; but we would quickly even up the score by killing and wounding just as many on their side."

"Perhaps so; but even so, that would not be satisfactory. I rate each one of my 'Liberty Boys' as being worth at least four redcoats, and to go into an affair that promises to yield us man for man, in killed and wounded, would not be at all satisfactory."

"Well, that is true, too, I guess."

"Yes; I must take care of my company of brave comrades, or I would soon not have any."

"I'm afraid I wouldn't be a very good commander, Dick," said Bob.

"Oh, you do very well, Bob. I have left you in command of the company a number of times, and you have given a good account of yourself."

"That is because I always do, not as I would like to do, but as I think you would want me to do."

The youths stood on the top of the hill, and watched the redcoats closely.

What would they do?

This was an interesting question, and on its answer would depend the action of the "Liberty Boys."

The British were watching the youths as closely as they themselves were being watched, and they were conferring among themselves. Evidently they hardly knew what to do.

The party of a dozen redcoats who had been chased by the "Liberty Boys" were very angry, and wished to make an attack.



"Let's go for the rascally rebels!" cried one. "We outnumber them, and can thrash them."

"But you must remember that they have the advantage of position," said one of the members of the large party of British. He was a captain, and was in command of the force.

"Yes," said another; "and if I am not mistaken, those are the scoundrels known as 'The Liberty Boys of '76'."

"And if that is the case," said the captain, "then it will be the part of wisdom to be very careful how we make an attack on them."

"Yes, indeed," agreed another; "but at the same time it would be a great feather in our caps if we could kill a few of them, and capture some of the rest."

"So it would," agreed the captain, a thoughtful look on his face. "Well, I'm willing to make the attempt; but I am going to exercise caution, just the same. It won't do to take any chances against the 'Liberty Boys.'"

"No; you may be sure it won't do."

They talked the matter over, and finally decided upon a course of action.

They would enter the woods at the right and left, and advance slowly and cautiously, spreading out as they did so, and in this manner surround the "Liberty Boys."

"I think that by so doing we can at least keep them engaged, and hold them in the one spot till reinforcements come," said the captain. "And then, with an overwhelming force against them, they will be forced to surrender."

## CHAPTER IV.

### AN ENGAGEMENT.

But Dick Slater was watching the redcoats closely.

He was doing some swift thinking, trying to figure out what the enemy would naturally try to do, under the circumstances, and even before the British had divided their party and entered the timber at each side he had made up his mind what they would most likely try to do; and when they entered the timber he was sure he was right.

They were going to try to surround his force, engage it, and hold it there till reinforcements came, when its capture would be insured.

"We'll see about that, my fine fellows!" he said to himself. And then he told the "Liberty Boys" what he believed the enemy was going to try to do, and he also quickly explained what he wished to do.

Having explained, he ordered the youths to move, and they ran swiftly down the road, in the direction from which they had come only a few minutes before.

They kept on till they had gone perhaps one hundred and fifty yards, and then the force divided in equal parts, and fifty of the youths entered the timber at the right-hand and fifty at the left-hand side of the road.

They had been given their instructions, and knew what to do.

As soon as they were in the timber they began making a turn to the right on one side of the road, and to the left on the other, and they marched in a half-circle.

They stretched out in single file, and the youths were perhaps thirty to forty yards apart. In this manner they kept on, and presently they began catching glimpses of men in front of them. The men in question had on brilliant, scarlet coats—they were the redcoats, who imagined they were surrounding the "Liberty Boys" on the top of the hill.

But they were destined to be undeceived.

Instead of surrounding the "Liberty Boys," the youths were surrounding them, and soon they had done so.

The redcoats stretched around the top of the hill, a long string of soldiers, and back of them, a distance of fifty yards, were the "Liberty Boys."

It looked as though it was going to be a case of the biters bitten. This was what Dick Slater intended it should be, at any rate.

He and his "Liberty Boys" had come across the river to make things lively for the redcoats, and here was a chance to do so.

They were not likely to miss the chance.

The youths knew what was expected of them, and they got into position, and with muskets held in readiness, awaited the signal from Dick, which would tell them to take aim.

Presently it came—the faint note of the whip-poor-will.

The muskets went to the shoulders of the "Liberty Boys," and keen eyes glanced along the barrels and through the sights.

Perhaps twenty seconds elapsed, and then again the note of the whip-poor-will sounded.

And at the same instant one hundred fingers pressed one hundred triggers, and one hundred reports of muskets blended together in a grand roar.

Instantly it sounded as though Bedlam had been loosed. Yells, shrieks, and groans resounded on the air.

The voice of the British captain was heard, also, giving orders to his men, who had been thrown into terrible confusion by the unexpected volley.

Of course, the "Liberty Boys" had been unable to get a good shot in every case, but many had, and quite a number of the redcoats were killed outright; but many more were simply wounded, and these it was who were sending up the groans and shrieks.

The sudden attack from the rear had come to the redcoats as a total surprise.

They had supposed the enemy was on the top of the hill, and that they had said enemy surrounded; and now, of a sudden, they were undeceived. The enemy was not on the top of the hill, but was behind them—had them surrounded, in fact.

And this knowledge was in itself terrifying.



It proved that the youths they had expected to kill and capture were dangerous.

Acting under the orders of their captain, the British soldiers leaped behind trees, and thus shielded their bodies, while they peered carefully and fearfully around the trees in an effort to catch sight of some of the members of the attacking force.

But they failed.

The "Liberty Boys" were too old hands at this sort of work to permit themselves to be seen.

They were much more expert in woodcraft than were the redcoats. The British soldiers had never been trained in this sort of work.

In the open field, where the maneuvers could be executed, they were all right, and right at home, but in the timber, among the trees, they were not nearly so good.

The "Liberty Boys," however, were very much at home. This sort of fighting was all right for them, though they could fight in the open field, too, if occasion demanded it. To this fact hundreds of British soldiers who had seen them on the field of battle could testify.

While the redcoats were hiding behind the trees and making an attempt to catch sight of their enemies, the "Liberty Boys" busied themselves reloading their muskets, and were soon ready for another volley.

They would not get another such chance as they had just had, however; but would have to content themselves with picking off one here and there.

Captain Horton—this was the name of the commander of the British force—hardly knew what to do.

He was at a great disadvantage, and knew it.

At this sort of work his men were not equal to the enemy.

There seemed to be only one thing to do, therefore, and that was to retreat.

He sent the word along the line of soldiers, telling them to gradually concentrate at the top of the hill, and the movement was begun.

Of necessity the redcoats moved slowly, for it was dangerous to move in any other way.

They had to keep their bodies protected behind trees, or they would fall victims of the deadly marksmanship of the enemy.

So they moved slowly, sheltering themselves as best they could.

Dick and his "Liberty Boys" knew what was going on, and they kept a sharp watch for chances to inflict damages upon the enemy.

Several of the youths got chances to do execution, and they improved them.

Two of the redcoats were killed and several more were wounded before they succeeded in getting together at the top of the hill.

The redcoats were in anything but a good frame of mind.

They were greatly enraged, and were eager to strike the enemy a blow in return for the blows they had received,

but they did not see how they were to succeed in doing so.

They felt that they would be doing well if they succeeded in holding the enemy at bay.

They had lost, in killed and wounded, at least thirty men, and this was about one-fourth of their number.

Captain Horton ordered that the men should begin firing. He instructed that each alternate soldier should fire, and that when these had reloaded their muskets the other half of the force should fire; and that this should be kept up.

"In that way we shall be able to keep the rebels from charging, I think," he said; "and, also, our friends in the encampment will hear the firing and come to our aid. Then we will make those rascally rebels run like frightened hares."

The men welcomed the order, for anything was better than doing nothing. They were glad to fire, even though they saw nothing to fire at, and they hoped that some of the bullets might find lodgment in the bodies of their enemies.

The "Liberty Boys" understood the meaning of the volley.

They knew it was simply intended as an intimidation.

"Their idea is to keep us from charging them," said Dick to Bob, who was next him in the line.

"I guess you are right, Dick."

"Yes; and they might as well spare themselves the trouble of firing and save their ammunition, for I have no intention of charging them."

"I'd like the fun of doing it, Dick."

There was an eager look on Bob's face and a fire in his eyes that proved he meant what he said.

"I know you would, Bob. And so, I am sure, would all the boys. But I do not think it would be a wise move. We would be sure to lose a number of our brave boys, and that I do not wish to do."

"True, Dick. Well, we have given the enemy something to think about, even as it is."

"Yes, we have done very well. We should be willing to take it slow and easy."

"Yes; we have all the best of it, so far."

"So we have; and I wish to keep it in that shape."

The "Liberty Boys" worked their way gradually nearer to the top of the hill, however, and were soon surrounding the enemy, and at a distance of only about forty yards from the British force.

The redcoats, however, were lying down, flat upon their faces, and so made a difficult mark, the more so as they were sheltered in addition by trees, rocks, etc.

The youths fired occasionally, however, as they caught sight of a head, arm, or leg. And they succeeded in inflicting wounds, on several occasions, much to the anger of the redcoats.

The latter had not, so far as they knew, succeeded in inflicting a single wound as yet, although they had fired several volleys.



They had done better than they knew, however, for they had wounded two of the "Liberty Boys," but not seriously.

How the affair would have ended it is hard to say; but when the British had been on the hilltop an hour or more some of the "Liberty Boys" caught sight of a force of British coming up the road, and gave the alarm.

Dick sized up the advancing force, and his decision was that there were about two hundred in the party.

"We'll give them a volley, boys, and then retreat," he said; and then he gave the order for the youths to come around on the east side of the road, away from the direction of the British encampment, as there might be some more redcoats coming from that direction, and in case this was a fact, the youths might be taken from the rear, and annihilated.

In the other direction they would be able to retreat without encountering hindrance, Dick was sure.

This maneuver was soon executed, and without having been discovered by the redcoats on the hilltop. The fact was, these men had just discovered the approaching body of their friends, and their attention was attracted in that direction.

The "Liberty Boys" hastened down alongside the road, a distance of one hundred yards, and then, being well within range, they took aim and suddenly poured a volley into the ranks of the British.

Wild yells, shrieks, and groans went up from the British, and then, with the exception of the men who had fallen, they dashed into the timber in search of the hidden enemy.

But they did not find the boys.

Dick Slater and his "Liberty Boys" had retreated instantly, on firing the volley, and ran so swiftly that the British did not so much as catch a glimpse of them.

## CHAPTER V.

### A COUPLE OF DISAPPOINTED OFFICERS.

"We're safe now."

"Yes, I think so."

"There is no use running any longer."

"No, I think not."

The "Liberty Boys" had retreated on the run till they had gone half or three-quarters of a mile, and then the above words had been exchanged by Dick Slater and Bob Estabrook.

Next Dick gave the order to cease running, and the youths obeyed.

They halted, and while getting their breath, after the swift run, reloaded their muskets.

"I tell you, we gave the redcoats a surprise!"

"So we did!"

"We downed a number that last volley."

"You bet!"

"I'll wager they are angry."

"Mad as hornets, you may be sure."

"Let them be; we don't care."

Such were a few of the remarks indulged in by the "Liberty Boys," and then Bob asked Dick what they were going to do next.

"I'll tell you what I have decided upon," said Dick. "We will return to the vicinity of Mr. Folger's house. We'll hide in the timber, and then, if the British come there and go to acting up, we will make another attack on them."

"That's the thing to do!" cried Joe Hunter, who had joined the "Liberty Boys" as they ran past the Folger house.

"We knew you would favor that, Joe!" grinned Bob, who could not resist the temptation to have fun at the expense of a comrade even when there was no knowing but a fight with the enemy might be begun at any moment.

The "Liberty Boys" moved onward now, and twenty minutes later were hidden in the edge of the timber back of Mr. Folger's house.

Joe Hunter went to the house, to tell the folks not to be alarmed if they saw a force of British coming, as the "Liberty Boys" were on hand to protect them; but when he told how many there were of the British, Mr. Folger said he thought that it would be only the part of wisdom for them to retire to the timber, where the "Liberty Boys" were.

"I don't think that you boys will be able to hold the British in check," he said. "There will be nearly three times as many of them as there are of you, and that is too great odds for even you to fight against successfully."

"Perhaps you are right," said Joe, with a glance at Bessie. "It would be foolish to take chances when it is possible to be on the safe side. But come along at once, for the redcoats may put in an appearance at any moment."

This was looked upon as being good advice, and so they left the house and made their way to the point where the "Liberty Boys" were.

Dick approved of their move.

"I would have told you to have them come here when you went to the house, Joe," he said. "But the fact is that I don't really expect that the enemy will come to the house."

"What makes you think that?" asked Bob.

"Well, you see, they have a number of their comrades to bury, and quite a good many wounded ones to take care of, and I think they will carry the wounded to the main encampment before doing anything else. That will take up so much time that they will not get to the house until some time this afternoon, if then."

"There may be something in that," said Bob.

And so it proved.

One, two, three hours rolled away, and still the redcoats failed to put in an appearance.

Dick had sent three of the "Liberty Boys" to scout around in the direction the enemy was expected to come



from, and so, feeling safe, the entire party went to the house at noon, with the Folgers, and ate dinner there.

The youths remained at the house all the afternoon, and the enemy did not put in an appearance. The scouts came to the house at intervals, and reported, each time, that they had been unable to catch sight of the British.

Dick did not understand it.

"I was sure they would put in an appearance some time this afternoon," he said. "I don't know what to think."

"Nor do I," said Bob.

The others said the same.

"I'll tell you one thing," said Dick. "If they don't come before dark I shall go and spy upon them in their main encampment. I am afraid their failure to appear means something."

"You must be careful, Dick," cautioned Bob; "you will be in great danger if you venture into the British encampment, or even close to it."

"Oh, I'll be careful."

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Let us see what the British have been doing.

As may well be supposed, they were terribly enraged when they were given the volley so unexpectedly, as has been told.

They set out in pursuit of the "rebels," but they were unable to catch sight of a single "rebel," and soon gave up the chase, and went back to the road, where lay the dead and wounded.

Here the commander of the new and larger force held a council with Captain Horton, the commander of the smaller force.

It was decided that they would first bury the dead, and then they would take the wounded back to the camp. This done, they would join issues and secure permission from General Burgoyne to go in chase of the party of "rebels," and to keep after them till they had been killed or captured.

They put this plan into effect, insofar as burying the dead and carrying the wounded back to the encampment was concerned, but when they went to General Burgoyne, and asked permission to take a force of four hundred men and go in search of the party of "rebels," the general shook his head.

"I cannot grant you the permission you crave," he said.

"Why not?" asked Captain Horton, in a disappointed voice.

"I have other work for you."

"Other work for us?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"I will not state what it is just now, but as soon as the sun has sunk to rest in the west you will learn what it is that I have for you to do."

The two officers were forced to swallow their disappointment, and this they did, but with a very bad grace.

They took their departure from headquarters, feeling in anything but a happy frame of mind.

They went to their quarters and talked the matter over. "What do you think the general intends doing?" asked Captain Horton.

"You have me there," was the reply of the other, who was also a captain, his name being Winchester.

"Winchester, it looks as though we are to be cheated out of a chance to be revenged on those scoundrel rebels."

"So it does, Horton."

"Jove, I wish we had known how it would be, sooner!"

"Why so?"

"We would not have returned to camp, but would have gone right on in search of the rebels."

"That's so; we would have been all right, then."

"So we would."

"Yes; but it can't be helped now."

"No; we are here, and cannot leave without permission from the general."

"That is a sober fact."

"And a very unpleasant one."

"Yes; I am eager to get a chance at the rascally rebels who handled us so roughly."

"And so am I."

"Perhaps the general will let us go in search of the enemy, to-morrow."

"I hope so."

Presently a quartette of the soldiers of the command under Captain Horton put in an appearance.

When they saw the two officers sitting there, with their belts off, looking glum, they asked what it meant.

"I thought we were to go back and hunt the rebels down and annihilate them," said one of the soldiers.

"So did we think so," said Captain Winchester.

"What's the trouble? Aren't we going to do it?" asked another.

The two captains shook their heads, slowly and dismally.

"No," was the reply, in unison.

"Why not?"

"Because the general has refused to permit us to do so," said Captain Horton.

"Why has he refused?"

"He says he has other work for us."

"What is the work?"

"We don't know."

"Well, that's queer."

"And mighty unpleasant and unsatisfactory," said Captain Winchester.

"The general said we would learn what it is that he wishes us to do as soon as the sun sets this evening," said Captain Horton.

"I wonder what can be in the wind?" remarked one of the soldiers.

"You can't prove it by us," said Captain Winchester.

"We haven't the least idea what is in the wind."

"We will have to wait and see," from Captain Horton.



“And those rascally rebels are to go scot free!” growled one of the soldiers.

“Scot free,” nodded Captain Horton.

“It’s a shame!” from one of the soldiers who had not yet spoken.

“So it is,” agreed Captain Winchester. “But we can’t help ourselves.”

“No,” from Captain Horton. “We will have to grin and bear it.”

They talked there for an hour, and wondered what could be done in the wind, and discussed the matter at length, but could come to no decision. They had nothing to work on. All they knew was that the general had said there would be work for them to do, when evening came, but that the work was to be more than they could guess.

They gave it up as a bad job, presently, and wisely came to the decision that they would wait till evening came, to learn what the general intended doing.

They waited the setting of the sun with considerable anxiety.

## CHAPTER VI.

### DICK AND BOB MAKE A DISCOVERY.

“What does it mean, Dick?”

“It means that the British are getting ready to cross the Hudson River.”

“Do you think so?”

“I do.”

“And that means——”

“That General Burgoyne has made up his mind to make an attack on the patriot army!”

“I believe you are right!”

“I am sure of it.”

“Then General Gates should know of this move, Dick.”

“Yes; he shall know of it before morning.”

“Good! Will you go, or shall I?”

“I guess you may go, Bob.”

“What will you do?”

“I will remain here and watch the enemy.”

“That’s a good plan.”

“I think so.”

It was about nine o’clock at night.

Dick Slater and Bob Estabrook had come up the river, and were spying on the British.

The main force of “Liberty Boys” had been left at the Folger home.

Dick and Bob, with their accustomed daring, had gone down to the river’s edge, and had made their way up the stream, between it and the British encampment.

They had made their way up the river a distance of three or four miles, and had then come upon a scene that had attracted their attention and secured their interest instantly.

They saw a large force of British soldiers at work along the river’s edge and out on the river, as well. It was a clear night, and it was possible to see what was going on with tolerable distinctness, and the youths noted that there were many soldiers out in the stream, in boats.

Then had occurred the conversation we have given above.

When they were talking, the youths supposed that the British intended to cross the river in the boats, but on moving up closer they discovered that they were wrong in thinking thus. The boats were to be used, but in a different manner from what they had supposed.

The youths saw, now, that the redcoats were making a bridge. The boats were used as foundations, and on these were placed long planks. In this way a bridge could be constructed easily in a night, by keeping as many men at work as there was room for.

“They’re building a bridge, Bob,” said Dick, in a whisper.

“So I see, Dick.”

“They will get it done to-night, easily.”

“I should think so.”

“Yes; General Gates must know of this at the earliest possible moment, Bob.”

“Then I must be going.”

“Yes, at once, Bob.”

“All right; I’m off.”

“I’ll accompany you to the extreme southern end of the British encampment, Bob; so as to make sure that you reach there without being captured.”

“All right; come along, if you like; but I am not afraid but what I can get there in safety.”

“There’s nothing like making sure of a thing, in a case of this kind, Bob.”

“I suppose you are right.”

The two turned and made their way back down the river.

Of course they had to be very careful, and this made their progress slow.

They were two hours going three miles, and then they were beyond the southern end of the British encampment.

“Now, get across to the other side and carry the news to General Gates, Bob,” said Dick.

“I will, Dick. Good-by.”

“Good-by.”

“Are you going back up to where they are making the bridge, Dick?”

“Yes.”

“Well, be careful.”

“I will. You keep your eyes open.”

“I’ll do that.”

“You might encounter a party of redcoats, you know.”

“I know that, Dick.”

At this instant there was a rush of footsteps, and a dozen dark forms appeared and attacked the youths.

“Redcoats, Bob!” exclaimed Dick. “Give it to them!”

The youths laid about them so lustily with their muskets that they brought the enemy to a sudden stop.



They had succeeded in knocking down four of the redcoats, but the rest drew pistols, and one called out, fiercely:

"Surrender, or we will riddle you with bullets, you rebels!"

Quick as a flash the youths fired their muskets, and dropped two of the British soldiers, and then they leaped behind trees.

This was not accomplished any too quickly, for there came the crack, crack! of weapons, and bullets whistled past the trees behind which the youths had taken refuge.

But this was a game that two could play at, and Dick and Bob drew pistols and fired shots, again with effect, for two more of the enemy fell, either dead or wounded.

The four who had been knocked down by the youths were now scrambling to their feet, and feeling that they could not hope to defeat the party, Dick said to Bob:

"Come! We must get away from here!"

Then he darted away, Bob keeping close at his heels.

There were a number of pistol shots fired by the redcoats, but none took effect, and fearing that they were to lose their prey after all, the redcoats set out in pursuit.

They were no match for the two "Liberty Boys" at this kind of game, however, and were speedily left far behind.

When sure they were safe from further pursuit, Dick and Bob slackened their speed to a walk.

"Phew, that was warm work, Bob," said Dick.

"Yes, while it lasted," said Bob. "That's the kind of work for me, though, old man."

"Well, I don't mind a little of it, myself, once in a while, Bob; especially when it turns out all right, as was the case this time."

"That's right."

"I guess it won't be safe for me to venture back up the river now," said Dick, after a short period of silence, during which time they walked steadily onward.

"No. It would be as much as your life was worth, Dick."

"True; so I'll go down to where the boats are, and see you off."

"And then where will you go, Dick?"

"Back to Mr. Folger's."

"And shall I come there when I come back over?"

"Yes."

They walked rapidly onward, and half an hour later arrived at the spot where the boats were concealed.

It did not take them long to get one of the boats into the water, and then Bob got in, took the oars, and pulled down the creek toward the river.

As soon as Bob was out of sight Dick turned and made his way toward the Folger farmhouse.

Bob rowed down the creek and out into the Hudson River.

He had not pulled half a dozen strokes after reaching the river before he heard the sound of oars rattling in rowlocks, and also the sound of voices; and the next

moment a boat's bow shot into view fifty yards distant, in the stream.

Bob bent to the oars like a good fellow.

He was certain the occupants of the boat were redcoats and it would not do to be captured.

The men in the boat caught sight of the "Liberty Boy," and one called out, in a loud, commanding voice:

"Stop! Bring your boat to a standstill, you rascal! rebel, or we'll fill you full of lead!"

But Bob did not obey.

Instead, he bent to the oars and rowed as he had never rowed before.

He forced the boat to almost leap through the water.

"Stop!" again called out the voice. "For the last time I warn you to stop rowing!"

But he might have spared himself the exertion of yelling.

It would take more than words to stop Bob Estabrook.

The redcoat seemed to realize this when he saw the "rebel" keep right on working away at the oars, as though for dear life, and he gave an order to some of the occupants of the boat, of whom there were seven or eight.

The next moment a deafening roar rang out.

The redcoats had fired a volley at Bob.

Being on the water, the noise made by the shots was accentuated, and sounded much louder than would have been the case on land.

Two or three bullets spatted close around Bob, striking the boat, but luckily he was not hit.

He continued to row with all his might, his lips pressed grimly together, and a look of resolution in his eyes.

"Shoot, you cowards!" he murmured. "Shoot, if you want to, but I can tell you that you won't get Bob Estabrook to stop unless you drop him dead in the bottom of this boat!"

Bob wished to return the fire of the redcoats, but knew that to do so would be very dangerous, as he would lose time. His boat would lose its headway, and the probabilities were that he would be overhauled.

No, he would have to keep on rowing, and trust to his speed to get away from the enemy.

The redcoats had lost some ground, on account of having taken time to fire the volley, and they worked now in an effort to regain it.

Again the leader of the force in the boat called out to Bob to stop, but the youth paid no attention to him whatever.

"You are wasting your breath, my friend," the youth said to himself. "You might as well save it, for you may need it later on."

The other boat was so heavily laden compared to Bob's that he presently began drawing away from his pursuers.

They discovered this fact, and fired another volley, but the majority of the bullets fell short. What few did reach as far as the boat, did no damage.

"I am going to get away from them!" Bob told himself and he was greatly pleased on account of this. He was



ing across the river on important business, and would have hated it had he been captured.

Presently the redcoats gave up the chase and turned back to the east shore of the river. Bob continued onward, and not long afterward reached the west shore, and landed.

Pulling the boat up as far out of the water as he could, tied the painter to a tree, and hastened away in the direction of the patriot encampment.

## CHAPTER VII.

### BOB CARRIES THE NEWS.

He soon reached the encampment, and having passed the sentinels, made his way toward headquarters.

The general was in bed, so the orderly told Bob, but the youth said he had important information, and the orderly went and awoke General Gates and told him who wished to see him and what he had said.

"Show him into my office," said General Gates. "I will let him up right away, and hear what he has to say."

Bob was ushered into the general's office, and sat down to await the coming of the officer.

He did not have very long to wait.

Ten minutes had elapsed when the general entered.

"Well, Bob, I'm glad to see you," he said. "What is the news? Have you learned something of interest?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is it?"

"The British are going to come across the river."

"Say you so?" eagerly.

"Yes, sir."

"How do you know this?"

"Dick and I spied on them, this evening."

"Ah, and you heard them say they were coming across the river, did you?"

"No, sir; we saw them building the bridge."

"A bridge of boats, I presume?"

"You are right, sir."

"Where is this bridge being thrown across?"

"About two miles up the river from here."

General Gates got up and paced the floor for a few moments in silence. He was looking down, pondering intently.

Presently he paused and resumed his seat.

"This is a serious matter," he said, as though half speaking to himself. "I shall have to call a council and decide upon our course of action."

He summoned the orderly.

"Call all the other officers of the staff," he ordered.

The orderly bowed.

"Tell them that I wish them to report here at their earliest convenience, and that matters of great importance are to be discussed."

"Yes, sir," and then the orderly withdrew.

Ten minutes passed, and then one of the officers put in an appearance.

One after another they came, then, until all were there, and then General Howe told them the news.

"And now the question is," he said in conclusion, "what is to be done?"

The officers of the staff were surprised.

"So the British are building a bridge!"

"They are coming over, eh?"

"Well, let them come!"

"That is just the question," said General Gates. "Whether or not we shall let them come."

"We can strike them a blow as they are trying to cross," said one, "and make them give up the attempt."

"But would that be wise?" asked General Arnold.

"Why would it not be wise?" asked another officer.

"Well, I'll tell you. To my way of thinking it will be a good move to let the British cross the river."

"Why so?" from General Gates.

"Well, it will give us a chance at them—a chance which we cannot hope to get so long as they remain on the other side of the river."

"Yes, but it will also give them a chance at us," objected another officer.

"Bah! we have an unassailable position here on the Heights," said Arnold.

"You think we could hold this against the British, then?" asked Gates.

"Yes; more, we can thrash them on level ground," was the confident reply.

Many of the officers shook their heads doubtfully.

"I am not so sure about that, General Arnold," said one.

"Nor I," from another.

"Well, I am sure of it," the fighting general, as he was called, declared.

General Gates was thoughtful.

"I think we could hold Bemis Heights," he said. "But I don't know about whipping the enemy on level ground, and with the armies on equal terms."

"The British outnumber us," said another, "so it would not be on equal terms."

"That is true, too," said Arnold. "But we have the best possible position here on the Heights, and we can watch the enemy, and when we see a chance to strike them a blow we can do it, and then if they try to get back at us we will be able to beat them easily enough."

The other officers were not so sure about it. Some favored letting the British come across the river, but others were against it.

There was quite a long discussion, to which Bob listened with interest. He was of the same mind as was General Arnold. He was a fighter, and wanted that the British should be permitted to come across the river, in order that the patriots might have a chance at them.

The discussion lasted two hours, and then it was decided to permit the British to come across the river.



The idea was that so long as the enemy was on the east side of the river, there would be no chance to strike it a blow; but if it was on the west side of the stream, then by watching closely, opportunities might be found to strike them severe blows.

It was believed that Bemis Heights was an unassailable position. This would make it a safe thing to permit the British to come across the stream and take up its position on the west side.

So it was decided not to do anything to discourage the British, but to let them come.

"We'll attend to their case after they have got across," said General Arnold.

When this decision had been reached Bob was told that he might return to the east side of the stream and tell the "Liberty Boys."

"I judge that you may as well come right back over here at once," said General Gates.

"Let us stay till the enemy has crossed, sir, will you not?" asked Bob.

This permission was given.

Then Bob took his departure, and made his way back to where he had disembarked from the boat.

He rowed out into the river, and headed across.

He headed pretty well upstream, for the boat that had chased him as he was coming over had forced him to go downstream nearly a mile.

It was a pretty hard pull, but Bob was a good oarsman and a strong youth, and was equal to the task.

Half an hour later he was rowing up the creek.

On arriving at the point where the other boats were, Bob leaped out, and drawing the boat up as well as he could, tied the painter to a tree.

Then he hastened away in the direction of the Folger farmhouse.

He had gone perhaps half a mile when he suddenly found himself confronted by four men.

They had leaped out from among the trees at the side of the road, and had him covered with rifles before he knew he was even so much as in danger.

"Hello! Who are you fellows?" exclaimed Bob, seemingly not in the least frightened.

"You'll find out soon enough. Don't try any tricks!" was the reply from one of the four. "Up with your hands!"

Bob raised his hands above his head.

He had no intention of permitting himself to be made a prisoner, but thought it was as well to pretend that he had no intention of offering resistance.

It would throw his enemies off their guard.

"Well, now that my hands are up, who and what are you fellows?" asked Bob.

"We are men who will not be trifled with," was the stern reply.

"Indeed?"

"Yes."

"Well, I have no wish to trifle with you. But why have you leaped out in this fashion, and forced me to halt?"

"That is easily answered, Dick Slater, and——"

Bob burst into a roar of laughter.

"Dick Slater, did you say?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, you are Dick Slater."

"Oh, no."

"Yes, you are!"

"You are mistaken, I assure you. I am not Dick Slater."

"Of course you would say so."

"Because it is the truth."

"Bah! You cannot deceive me. I know you are Dick Slater, and we are going to take you to the British encampment and secure the reward that is offered for you."

Again Bob laughed.

"You will never secure any reward for taking me to the British encampment," he said.

"You think that, do you?"

"I know it, for I am not Dick Slater."

"We'll risk that part of it; and now I am going to ask Will you surrender peaceably, or will you try to show fight?"

"Oh, I shall surrender peaceably. I would be a fool to show fight, don't you think?"

"Yes, I think so, to tell the truth, for it could only result in one way."

"So I suppose."

Then, with a lightning-like motion, Bob leaped ten feet to one side.

Crack, crack! went the rifles, but the bullets did not hit Bob, and the next instant he was in among the trees, and was safe.

At any rate he felt safe. He did not believe the men could catch him now.

Away he darted through the timber.

He heard wild yells of rage and excitement, and then the crashing of underbrush came to his hearing.

"They are pursuing me," he told himself. "Well, let them. I'll wager they won't catch me."

On Bob dashed, and presently he could not hear any sounds to indicate he was being pursued. He had succeeded in shaking off his pursuers.

Twenty minutes later he was among his comrades at the Folger farmhouse.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### WATCHING THE BRITISH.

"So General Gates is going to let the British cross the river, is he, Bob?"

"Yes."

"What's his idea for that?"

"They talked it over in council, Dick, and it was de-



ecided that if they permitted the British to come across the river there would be chances to strike them occasionally, while as it is now there is no such opportunity."

"Well, I think we may be trusted to strike them more than occasional blows, Bob."

"Yes; but we are not strong enough to do the enemy much damage."

"True."

"The idea is to let the British cross the river and then hit them hard when they are not expecting it."

"That will be all right, if it can be done."

"Well, you may trust General Arnold to find a way to do it, Dick."

"That's so. Arnold is wide awake, and a terrible fellow to fight."

"So he is."

It was morning, and the "Liberty Boys" were eating breakfast.

Bob was being questioned regarding the result of his trip across the river.

He told what the patriot officers had decided to do, as given above, and presently Dick Slater said:

"I have just thought of a good scheme, boys."

"What is it?"

"Yes, yes! Tell us!"

"We're ready for anything, Dick."

"Unfold your scheme, and you will find us ready to put it through to a successful issue."

"My scheme is this," said Dick. "To remain here till the entire British army is across the river, and then cut the bridge of boats adrift at this end, and then at the other as well, and send it drifting down the river."

This idea met with the approval of all.

Many were the exclamations of delight and approval given utterance to.

"That's just the thing!" declared Bob. "If we can do that it will make it an impossibility for the redcoats to get back across the river even if they wished to do so."

"But won't there be a force left on guard at this end of the bridge, Dick?" asked Mark Morrison.

"I don't know," was the reply. "But we can easily find out, and when we do we will know what to do. If it is not too strong a force, we will easily put it to flight, or capture it."

"So we will," agreed Mark.

Half an hour later Dick and Bob left the encampment, and made their way toward the river.

They moved slowly and carefully when they drew near the stream, for they did not wish their presence to be discovered.

They finally reached the bank of the river, without having encountered any British soldiers, and then they looked up the stream.

They saw what they had expected to see: the British were crossing the bridge of boats in a continuous string.

"There they go, sure enough, Bob," said Dick.

"Yes; they are hard at it. I suppose that a pretty strong force got across before daylight."

"Yes, that was their game, I suppose; you see, they did not know we knew of their move, and their idea was to get a strong enough force across the river in the night, to hold our men in check if they attempted to make an attack to-day."

"I judge you are right."

"Yes; I judge they would be surprised if they knew the patriots are glad to have them come over the river."

"It would surprise them a bit, I'll wager."

The youths watched for awhile, and then, seeing no signs of any British near at hand, they moved slowly and cautiously up the river.

They made their way along until they were within half a mile of the bridge, and here they caught sight of some redcoats, who were only a short distance away. The British soldiers were not a bit suspicious that they were under surveillance, however, seemingly, for they talked and laughed and paid no attention to their surroundings.

It was a portion of the main army, and as there were hundreds of soldiers near at hand, there did not seem to be any reason why the redcoats should be on their guard.

"They are waiting for their turn to cross the bridge," said Dick.

"Yes, that is it, Dick."

The youths took up positions where they would be comfortable, and watched the varying scenes with interest.

The stream of soldiers crossing the bridge was continuous and unbroken, save where, at intervals, were horses dragging cannon along, and wagons loaded with provisions and ammunition.

"What will be the end of this affair, Dick?" asked Bob, with a thoughtful air.

"Indeed, I don't know, Bob."

"Will the British thrash us and drive us away, and thus triumph here in the north, or will we get the better of them and force them to surrender?"

"That is more than I can say, Bob."

When noon came the two drew forth the packages of food that had been given them at the Folger farmhouse, and which they had carried in a leather bag hanging at their sides, and ate their dinner.

This done, a drink out of the river fixed them up in very good shape.

"I feel better," said Bob.

"I think I do, too, Bob," with a smile.

They returned to the work of watching the British, and were thus engaged when they heard the sound of footsteps, and looked around, to see half a dozen rough-looking men right close up to them.

The "Liberty Boys" were sitting down, and thinking it best not to bring about an encounter, if it could be avoided by coolness, they sat still, and looked up at the newcomers with a capital assumption of indifference; the expression on their faces was just as if they knew the new-



comers must be friends, and this was the idea Dick wished to convey.

It would throw them off their guard.

"Howdy," said Dick, yawning.

"Howdy, yerselves," was the reply, from a big, dark-faced fellow who seemed to be the leader.

"Nice day," said Bob, calmly.

"Yas, purty nice."

The six came to a halt near the youths, and eyed them curiously.

The "Liberty Boys" did not say anything more, but gazed up the river listlessly, just as if there had been no one other than themselves near.

"Who air ye two fellers?" asked the leader of the half-dozen.

"Friends, I guess," replied Dick, carelessly.

"Frien's uv our'n, ye mean?"

"Yes."

"How d'ye know thet!"

"We don't know it."

"Whut makes ye think et?"

Dick waved his hand lazily toward the British army.

"We are both too near the army, yonder, to be anything else but friends, don't you think?"

"I dunno 'bout thet. Air ye fellers loyal king's men?"

"Of course we are," was the prompt reply. "And so are you fellows, aren't you?"

"Yas, we air; but——"

"But, what?"

"How do we know ye fellers air loyal king's men?"

"The same way that we know you are."

"I know, but——"

"There are no 'buts' about it. We are loyal king's men, and so are you; so sit down here and take it easy."

"Of course, Dick and Bob did not have their uniforms on; they never wore these when on scouting or spying expeditions, as the instant they were seen it would be known they were "rebels." But by wearing common citizen's clothes they could, as in the present instance, pretend to be Tories, and in this manner get out of a good many scrapes.

The six rough-looking men were not yet satisfied, however, and they remained standing, while the leader said:

"How air we ter know ye hain't rebel spies, an' heer fur ther purpuss uv seein' whut ther British army is doin'?"

"Why, haven't I told you that such is not the case?" cried Dick, with well-simulated anger.

"Yas, but—uv course ye'd tell us thet."

"Of course I would—because it is true. How did I know you were loyal king's men? Because you are here near the British army, of course. That is the way you may know that we are loyal king's men, as well."

The man shook his head slowly, a dubious look on his face.

"I kain't see et thet way," he said. "I don' think thet proves et ertall."

"You do not?" in well-simulated surprise.

"No."

"Well, you must be a bit dumb—if you will excuse my telling you so," said Dick, calmly.

The fellow's face flushed somewhat.

"I don' know's I'm enny more dumb'n some other people I've seen in my time," he said. "I think thet et is more'n proberble thet ye two fellers air not loyal king's men er tall, an' thet ye air spies."

"What foolishness!" said Dick. "There is no sense in talking like that."

"Oh, ye think thet way erbout et, do ye?" There was anger, and a threat in the fellow's tones.

"Yes, we are loyal king's men, so sit down here and take it easy, and let's have a friendly talk."

Just then the youths saw one of the six men step forward and whisper in the ear of the leader.

They suspected that this meant trouble, and instantly they made ready to meet it.

They saw a look of delight appear on the face of the leader.

There was triumph in the look he bent on the youths and he said:

"I've jes' foun' out sumthin' erbout ye two fellers."

"Have you?" asked Dick, with apparent carelessness.

"Yas."

"What have you found out?"

"I've foun' out who ye air!"

Still the faces of the two did not betray that they took any particular interest in what was going on.

"Who are we, since you know so much?" asked Dick quietly.

"Yer Dick Slater, an' ther other feller is wun uv ye 'Liberty Boys'—thet's who ye air!"

The youths had been prepared to hear this, and did not show any signs of surprise or fear. Instead, they laughed aloud.

"What foolishness!" cried Dick.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE "LIBERTY BOYS" AT WORK.

"Oh, ye think et's foolishness, d'ye?" the dark-faced Tory cried.

"Of course it is."

"The worst kind of foolishness," declared Bob.

"Thet'll do ter tell," said the man, "but ye kain't make me berleeve et."

"No, don' ye berleeve 'em, Jim," said the one who had whispered in the dark-faced man's ear. "They air Dick Slater an' wun uv his 'Liberty Boys,' I know, 'cause I seen 'em, airly this mornin', up ter Folger's house."

The youths realized now that it would not do to try to make the Tories believe them to be loyalists, and so the only thing left for them to do was to make a fight—for



they had no intention of letting these fellows capture them.

The "Liberty Boys" understood each other so well that it was only necessary for them to exchange glances in order to know what to do. They glanced at each other now, and it was a signal that the time for action had arrived.

Instantly they leaped to their feet and dodged behind trees, drawing pistols as they did so.

At the first move the Tories hastily drew pistols, but the "Liberty Boys" were behind the trees before the fellows could fire upon them.

Seeing this, they hastily leaped behind trees, in their turn, for they realized that if these youths really were "Liberty Boys" they were not to be fooled with.

Dick and Bob seized upon the moment when the six were getting behind trees to change their location, and they were behind a couple of trees twenty feet from where they had been by the time the Tories were through executing their maneuver.

The Tories peered around the sides of the trees, their eyes fixed upon the two trees they had seen the youths disappear behind in the first place, and it was evident that they were surprised by not seeing any signs of the youths there.

Dick had picked up a stone the size of his fist, in making the change from one tree to the other, and he now threw the stone a considerable distance over to one side; the Tories all turned their eyes in the direction where the stone struck, it making quite a loud noise, and the "Liberty Boys" took advantage of the opportunity and slipped away, managing to get clear around in the rear of the six king's men.

The Tories were still gawking in the direction from which had come the noise when the stone struck in the rush, and little did they suspect that right back of them, each with two pistols cocked and leveled, stood the youths for whom they were looking.

It was an interesting tableau—or it would have been interesting to see had there been anyone there to see it. This did not happen to be the case, however, so it may be said to have been a tableau wasted.

Seeing the Tories had no thought that the enemy was behind them, and consequently would not be likely to look in that direction soon, Dick coughed, to attract their attention.

He was successful.

The six whirled quickly, as one man.

The sight which met their gaze was so utterly unexpected and startling that they dropped their pistols and stared in open-mouthed amazement. There was fear written on their faces, as well. Indeed, they seemed to be temporarily paralyzed, for they stood motionless, and stared.

To Dick realized intuitively that he and Bob were masters of the situation, and so he decided to end the affair once and for all.

Suddenly he stamped on the ground, and cried out, fiercely:

"Go! Away with you, or you are dead men! Quick! Away with you!"

This broke the spell.

Realizing that they were not to be shot down in cold blood, the six men recovered the use of their faculties, and lost no time in obeying Dick's order.

They whirled and dashed away at the top of their speed, and without stopping to pick up their pistols. Doubtless they would have been afraid to pick the weapons up, even had they thought of doing so.

The Tories ran in the direction of the British force, and Dick turned to Bob, and said:

"We had better be getting away from here, Bob."

The youth nodded.

"I guess you are right," he agreed. "They will be back here with a gang of redcoats in a few minutes."

"So they will; and we must be somewhere else."

"You're right; but let's take the pistols."

"Yes, we'll do that."

They gathered up the six pistols, and then hastened away, through the timber.

They went away around, and took up their position on the top of a hill, half a mile away from the river. By climbing into the top of a tree they were enabled to get a good view of the British.

Bob chuckled in an amused manner occasionally, and finally Dick said:

"What is so funny, Bob?"

"I can't help thinking how comical those Tories looked, Dick, when they turned and saw us standing behind them, pistols in hand," said Bob, and he chuckled again.

Dick smiled.

"They did look astonished, didn't they?" he said.

"Astonished is no name for it. They were absolutely paralyzed with amazement and terror."

"It was enough to startle and amaze them, Bob; they were taken wholly by surprise."

"Yes; they thought we were in one place, and then to find us standing right behind them, with leveled pistols in our hands was too much for them."

And then Bob chuckled again.

The youths watched the British till nearly supper time, and by that time the greater portion of the army had crossed the river.

"I'm hungry," said Bob, "and we ate all our grub at noon. What are we going to do?"

"I'll tell you what we'll do, Bob."

"What?"

"We'll go back to Mr. Folger's and have some supper."

"That suits me."

"Then we will all come back here, and you and I will go forward and investigate, and if all is in shape for our work we will go at it."

"Good enough; come on."



They descended and hastened away through the timber. Half an hour later they were at the Folger farmhouse, where they were given a warm welcome by all.

The youths were eager to know what the two had learned, and they told what they had seen.

And when the "Liberty Boys" learned that all were to go back, after supper, they were delighted. They did not like inaction, and to be forced to remain a whole day in one place was very trying to them.

When supper had been prepared and eaten, preparations were begun for the work which was before them.

The youths looked carefully to their weapons, and saw that the muskets and pistols were properly primed and the flints in place.

Then, as soon as it was growing dark, they bade the Folgers good-by, and marched away up the road.

They kept to the road three-quarters of a mile, and then turned aside and entered the timber.

They moved onward, half a mile, and then Dick called a halt.

"You boys remain here awhile," he said. "Bob and I will go forward on a reconnoitering expedition, and as soon as we have gotten the lay of the land we will return."

Then he and Bob set out, and moved slowly and cautiously forward.

They soon reached the river, and found all clear at the point where they were.

Here Dick paused, and told Bob to return and tell the "Liberty Boys" to come along.

Bob hastened back, and twenty minutes later the entire party was at the river.

"Now, I think it will be safe for us to make our way up the river," said Dick. "Bob and I will go ahead, a couple of hundred yards, and keep that distance in front, and if we signal you, you boys are to stop. You understand?"

The youths said they did, and then Dick and Bob moved away, up along the river.

When they had been gone a few minutes the entire party moved forward, slowly and steadily.

The two youths who were in the lead kept a sharp lookout as they went along.

They did not know but they might run upon a force of the British at any moment. They did not really believe that they would do so, but realized that there was a possibility that they might, and for this reason they were very careful.

It was a fairly dark night. There was no moon, but the stars were bright, and it was possible to make headway through the timber without much difficulty.

It would make it necessary to get close to a sentinel before he could be seen, however, and this was the reason the youths moved so slowly and carefully. If there was a British sentinel ahead of them, they wished to discover him before he discovered them, if possible.

At last they were almost to the point where the bridge

was built across the river. Here the youths were confident they would find some redcoats.

The British would be certain to leave at least a small party on this side, to see to it that none of the "rebels" should cut the bridge loose from the bank, and send the affair out into the middle of the stream.

And the youths were right. As they drew near they saw a camp-fire.

This pleased them; it would enable them to get close and size up the party of redcoats.

Closer and closer the two "Liberty Boys" drew to the spot where the camp-fire blazed, and they presently paused, and, sheltered behind trees, gazed upon the force of British soldiers.

It did not take long to decide how many there were of the enemy. Twenty was all that could be counted, and there might be one or two down at the end of the bridge.

Dick sent Bob back, with instructions to tell the boys to advance slowly and cautiously, and surround the party at the camp-fire.

Bob stole away, and twenty minutes later the "Liberty Boys" had surrounded the British.

They closed in gradually, and when they encountered the sentinel they seized him and made him a prisoner. He made an outcry, but it did not matter, as the main force of "Liberty Boys" rushed forward immediately afterwards and called upon the redcoats to surrender.

## CHAPTER X.

### SETTING THE BRIDGE ADRIFT.

The British soldiers saw they were outnumbered five or five to one, and making a virtue of necessity, surrendered.

Leaving half their number to bind the arms of prisoners, Dick, with the other half, rushed down to the end of the bridge, intent on seizing any soldiers who might be there.

In this he was not successful.

There had been four redcoats at the entrance to the bridge, but they heard the uproar, when the youths captured the sentinel, and also when the men at the camp-fire were surrounded and captured, and they had promptly darted out upon the bridge and made a dash for the other shore.

They were halfway across when Dick and his "Liberty Boys" reached the end of the bridge.

"After them, boys!" cried Dick. "We must capture them, if possible."

The "Liberty Boys" darted out onto the bridge, and with all their might.

It was no use, however; they could not overtake the fleeing redcoats.



When they were within one hundred yards of the west shore Dick called a halt.

"We had best not venture too near the shore," he said. "The redcoats have informed their comrades of what has taken place, no doubt, and there is likely to be a force awaiting our appearance, ready to give us a welcoming volley."

"Don't you think it likely they will even come out upon the bridge in search of us?" asked Bob.

"Well, it is possible, Bob."

"In that case it would be we fellows who would have to run."

"True, unless——"

"Unless what?"

"Unless we make it impossible to chase us."

"How can we do that?"

"By taking up one of the layers of planks, and cutting the ropes which bind the boats together."

"Ah, I understand. You mean for us to cut the bridge."

"Yes."

"Say, that's the thing we intended to do, Dick, so let's do it now."

"That is what I intend to have done, Bob. We'll cut the bridge here, as near the west shore as possible, and in that way we will deprive the British of the majority of their boats."

"That's the scheme, Dick!"

"We had better get to work, boys, for the redcoats may come at any moment."

"That's so," said Bob.

At this moment an uproar was heard on the shore.

"They're coming now!" cried Bob.

"I guess you're right, Bob. Well, work as fast as possible, boys. Jerk the boards up, and throw them in the river, and as soon as that has been done, cut the ropes and disconnect the boats."

The youths went to work with a will, and quickly had the boards all up and thrown into the river. The redcoats were by this time coming onto the bridge from the west shore, one hundred yards distant.

"Cut the ropes, quick!" cried Dick.

The youths obeyed.

"Now come!" Dick cried. "We must get far enough away as to be out of musket-shot distance when they reach the breach."

The youths darted away, back toward the east shore.

As they ran away from the point where they had disconnected the bridge, the loose ends had widened, through both floating downstream, until no man could have leaped across. And the distance was widening all the time.

"We will be safe from pursuit," thought Dick. "And if we can get out of musket-shot distance, we will be all right."

They succeeded, for they were three hundred feet distant when the redcoats came to the end of the section of the bridge that remained on their side of the stream.

When they discovered that the bridge was severed, and that they could not go any farther, the redcoats fired a volley into the darkness in the direction in which the "rebels" were supposed to be, but they did no damage. Indeed, the bullets were not fired in the direction of the "Liberty Boys" at all, as the British soldiers did not take into consideration the fact that the end of the bridge was swinging downstream.

A peal of mocking laughter came to their ears when the reverberations of the report of the volley had died away, and this made the redcoats very angry.

"The blasted rebels!" cried one.

"They have escaped us!"

"Yes, and have cut the bridge!"

"Worse than that—they have made prisoners of our comrades who were left on the other side."

"This is the work of those 'Liberty Boys'!"

Such were the exclamations, but the redcoats could do nothing, so they made their way back to the shore.

Their leader went to headquarters to report the affair to General Burgoyne.

He was admitted to the general's presence, and when he had told his story the officer was angry and amazed.

"This beats anything I have heard of in many a day!" he said. "Those scoundrelly 'Liberty Boys,' as you call them, are the most daring fellows I have known of since coming to America."

"So they are, sir."

"And you think there can be no doubt that they have captured the party of men we left on the east shore of the river?"

"There can be no doubt regarding the matter, sir."

"Too bad! Too bad!"

"So it is, sir!"

"And the rascals have cut the bridge, you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"Which makes it impossible for me to send a force over to rescue our brave men."

The general spoke as though talking to himself, and then, after a few moments' thought, he said:

"How near this shore was the bridge cut?"

"Within one hundred yards of it, sir."

"The daring rascals! They are a bold lot, aren't they?"

"They certainly are."

"Well, I know of nothing that we can do at present. You may go."

The soldier saluted and withdrew.

Meanwhile the "Liberty Boys" were busy.

They made their way back to the east shore, and then lost no time in cutting the bridge loose at that end.

This set the main portion of the bridge free, and it went floating down the stream.

"By morning it will be halfway to New York," said Dick.

"Yes; it won't be of any further use to Burgoyne, at any rate."

"You are right about that, Bob."



"What are we going to do now, Dick?" asked Mark Morrison.

"We are going to get back over to the patriot encampment, Mark," was the reply.

"Ah, then our work on this side of the river is ended?"

"Yes, for the present, at least—perhaps for good and all."

"That's likely. The redcoats are on the west side of the river, and have no way of getting back to this side."

"I think the affair will be settled before very long, now that the two armies are confronting each other," said Dick.

"I hope it will be settled, and in our favor," said Bob.

"We'll do our best to have it settled in that way, Bob," said Dick.

The youths soon set out in the direction of the Folger home.

Their prisoners, to the number of twenty, were in the midst of the "Liberty Boys," and it was something of a triumphal march that the youths were indulging in.

An hour later they arrived at the Folger home, and found the folks still up.

When Mr. and Mrs. and Bessie Folger saw the "Liberty Boys," with the prisoners in their midst, they were delighted. They had feared that the youths might find a strong force at the bridge, and get the worst of the encounter, but this was now proved to have been a groundless fear.

Joe Hunter called his sweetheart into the house, and explained that they were going back to the west side of the river.

"There is going to be some fighting between the British and patriot armies, and I will be so busy I may not get to come back for quite awhile, Bessie," he said.

"Well, I am sorry for that, Joe," was the reply, as she twined her arms around Joe's neck. "You'll be very, very careful, won't you, Joe?" she asked anxiously.

"Oh, yes, I'll be careful, Bessie, if not for my own sake, for yours."

"I am so glad! And you'll come back here to see me, just as soon as you can, won't you?"

"I certainly will, Bessie!" and then Joe gave her a hug and some kisses, and went back out to where the "Liberty Boys" were.

Dick was waiting for Joe to come out, and as soon as he was there the youth gave the command to march.

Good-bys were said, and then the youths and their prisoners marched away, quickly disappearing in the darkness.

When they had gone a quarter of a mile, Dick said to Bob:

"I am going to place the command of the 'Liberty Boys' in your hands for a little while, Bob."

"What are you going to do, Dick?"

"I'm going to the old mill, to say good-by to Harmod, and explain what has become of us."

"Oh, and shall we go straight on to where the boats are, Dick?"

"Yes; get the boats into the water, and begin getting

across the river. I will be with you before it is time for the last lot to go across."

"All right, Dick."

So Dick turned aside and plunged into the timber, while the "Liberty Boys" marched onward.

Half an hour later Dick arrived at the old mill, and found Harmod awake.

The old hermit greeted Dick pleasantly, for he liked the "Liberty Boy" immensely.

The youth explained all about what had happened, and Harmod was glad to know that things had gone so well with the "Liberty Boys."

Fifteen minutes later Dick shook hands with the old man, and bade him good-by. Then he took his departure, after promising to come and see Harmod if at any future time he should be in the vicinity.

Three-quarters of an hour later Dick was at the Hudson River, and was in plenty of time to cross with the last lot of "Liberty Boys."

It was not yet midnight when the youths, with their prisoners, marched into the patriot encampment on Bemis Heights, and they were given a warm welcome by such of the soldiers as were not asleep.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE BRITISH MAKE A MOVE.

The morning of September 19 was clear and beautiful.

The British army occupied a position a mile north of Freeman's Farm, and perhaps two miles and a half north of the patriot encampment on Bemis Heights.

This had been the positions occupied by the two armies for five days, the British having come across the river on the 13th.

The British had been studying the situation and making plans, while the patriots had been waiting and watching.

On this morning General Gates had sent for Dr. Thomas Slater.

"I wish you to take some of your 'Liberty Boys,'" Slater said, "and go and keep a close watch on the British. Somehow, I believe that they will make some kind of a move soon. They have remained quietly in camp there, about as long as they will be willing to remain. I am thinking."

"Very well, sir; I will attend to the matter," said Slater. Then he saluted and withdrew.

Returning to the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys," he told Bob Estabrook, Mark Morrison, and Sanderson to come with him.

"Where are we going?" asked Bob.

"To keep watch on the British."

"Well, that suits me."

"And me."



"I'd rather be doing that than sitting here doing nothing."

Such were the remarks of the three.

"Come along, then," said Dick. "We have no time to lose."

The youths made their way out of the encampment and halfway down the side of the Heights.

Selecting a point from which they could have a good and uninterrupted view of the country toward the north, they climbed four good-sized trees and turned their eyes in the direction in which the enemy would naturally be looked for.

The youths were in the tree-tops three or four hours, and saw nothing suspicious in that time.

"Say, Dick, I'm getting tired of this," called out Bob, who was in a tree only fifteen yards or such matter from the one Dick was in.

"Never mind; stick to it, Bob," was the reply.

"Oh, I'm going to do that; but it's tiresome work, just the same."

"So it is."

"Oh, you get tired too easily, Bob," called out Mark Morrison, who was next beyond Bob.

"Go along. You get tired easily, yourself," said Bob.

"That may be. I didn't say anything about myself."

"No; you'd rather talk about somebody else," said Bob, with a chuckle.

"Of course I would; I think a fellow is foolish to talk about himself. There are always enough people to do that, without him assisting in the work."

"Say, Mark, you're a philosopher, aren't you?" exclaimed Bob. "Jove, I didn't know you had it in you."

"Oh, I don't claim to be a philosopher, Bob."

"You're one without knowing it."

"Shut up, you fellows, and look yonder, in the timber," called out Sam Sanderson.

"Where, Sam?" asked Mark.

"Right straight to the north; see the flashes of scarlet and steel among the trees?"

There was silence while the four strained their eyes.

"I see it!" exclaimed Dick.

"So do I!" from Bob.

"And I!" added Mark.

"What do you think about it, Dick?" asked Sam.

"Redcoats!" was the reply.

"That's what I thought."

"Yes, and the flashing we see is from the glint of the bayonets."

"Jove, you're right, Dick, I am sure!" cried Bob.

"I think so, Bob. But we'll wait and make sure of what's going on before reporting it."

"Yes; that will be best. It will be a long time before the redcoats get close enough to make an attack, even if that's what they intend trying to do."

"Yes."

The youths watched closely and eagerly.

An hour passed, and by that time they were sure of their ground.

There was now no longer any doubt regarding the matter.

The British were advancing through the timber!

And they could have only one object in view: The attacking of the patriot army.

"I guess I had better go and make a report," said Dick.

"I think so, Dick," from Bob.

"You boys stay here and keep your eyes on the enemy."

"We will."

Dick descended, and hastened back up to the encampment.

He encountered General Arnold as he entered.

"You have been keeping watch, Dick?" the officer asked.

"Yes, General Arnold."

"Discover anything?"

"Yes; the British are advancing."

"What!"

"The British are coming, sir."

"Is that the truth, really, Dick?"

"Yes, sir."

"You saw them?"

"I did."

"Jove, that is good news!" cried Arnold. "How far away are they?"

"Oh, perhaps three-quarters of a mile."

"They are advancing slowly, of course."

"Yes. They are stealing through the timber, and it looks as though they intend turning our left flank and coming around toward our rear."

"Undoubtedly that is their intention. Well, come along to General Gates, and tell him the news. I will go with you, for I wish to ask permission to take a force and go down and engage the enemy."

The two hastened to General Gates' headquarters, and were soon in the commander's private room.

"Ah, Dick. Have you news for me?" the general asked.

"I have, sir. The British are advancing."

"Ha!"

"Yes, sir."

"Tell me all, my boy, at once."

The "Liberty Boy" did so, and the general listened with an eager look on his face.

Then he called his orderly and told him to summon the members of the staff.

"Tell them to hasten, as it is of the utmost importance," he said.

General Arnold asked permission to take a force and go down and meet the enemy, but General Gates would not listen to it for a moment.

"I will do nothing until after we have held a council of war," he said gruffly, "so you may as well make up your mind to that, and wait patiently."

There was not the best of feeling existing between Generals Gates and Arnold, and the younger man bit his lips



to keep back the angry words that were struggling for utterance.

He knew it would do no good to quarrel with his superior officer, and so he waited, as he had been advised to do—though it cannot be said that he waited patiently.

The officers of the staff were soon on hand, and then the matter was laid before them.

The affair was discussed earnestly.

Some were for remaining right where they were, and not advancing to meet the enemy, but to wait until they were attacked, but Arnold was eager to go down and engage the British, and he was supported by some of the officers in the view of the matter that he took—which was that if they met the enemy more than halfway, it would prove to them that the patriots were not afraid, and would have the effect of taking some of the moral courage out of them.

So, after a rather heated argument, Gates gave Arnold permission to take Morgan's riflemen and Dearborn's infantry and go down to meet the advancing British.

This was what General Arnold wanted, and he got out of headquarters and away as quickly as possible.

He was afraid Gates might change his mind at the last moment, and countermand the order.

Dick hastened out of headquarters in company with Arnold.

He had asked permission that he and his "Liberty Boys" should accompany Arnold, and was eager to let the youths know that there was work ahead.

He rushed to their quarters and told the boys to get ready, and then ran down to where the youths were in the tree-tops, and told the three to come down.

"We're going down to fight the British!" he called up to them, and they almost fell out of the trees, so hastily did they make the descent.

The "Liberty Boys" were all alike in one very important respect. They each and one would much rather fight than eat, even when hungry. So the statement that they were to go and fight the British was sufficient to cause the three to risk breaking their necks in getting quickly down out of the trees.

As they hastened back up the hillside the three explained to Dick that the enemy was still approaching, and that it was pursuing the same general direction that it had been pursuing from the first.

"And a force is coming up the river road, too, Dick," said Bob. "They just came in sight a few minutes ago."

"Well, maybe we can strike the British and have the engagement over with before that portion of the British army can reach the scene," said Dick.

"Perhaps so, Dick; and if we don't succeed in doing that we will whip the entire force."

"That's right!" said Sam Sanderson, who was almost as excitable and eager as was Bob.

They found the patriot force that was to accompany General Arnold almost ready when they got to the top of

the Heights, and the "Liberty Boys" were there, eager and alert.

The four youths at once took their places with the company of "Liberty Boys," and Dick, of course, took his place at their head.

Then General Arnold waved his sword and cried:

"Forward, march! On, men, and let us teach those rascally redcoats a lesson they will not forget in a hurry!"

Then the men marched forward, out of the encampment and down the hillside.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE FIRST BATTLE OF FREEMAN'S FARM.

Arnold's force met the British under Burgoyne at Freeman's Farm, and at once the fighting began.

The battle was soon raging.

The patriots fought with vigor and determination, and were forcing Burgoyne's force back when Fraser, with more British soldiers, came to his commander's assistance.

Even then the patriots continued to hold their own, and the roar of the musketry was almost continuous.

But still more reinforcements were coming to the aid of the British.

The German commander of the Hessians was coming up the river road, and would be upon the scene soon.

Arnold had not forgotten about this force, and he hurried Dick up, and said:

"Hasten back to the Heights, Dick, and tell General Gates to send me two thousand more men. With that number I can thrash the British soundly."

"Very well, sir. I'll go at once," said Dick.

He told Bob to take command of the "Liberty Boys," and then he hastened away.

He was not long in getting to the Heights.

He went at once to headquarters.

"Well, Dick, how are things going?" General Gates asked.

"We are holding the enemy in check, sir," said Dick. "and General Arnold has sent me for reinforcements. He says that if he had two thousand more men he could thrash the British soundly."

"What nonsense!" said Gates, frowning. "He could do nothing of the kind. I am sorry that I let him go down there in the first place, and I shall not permit any more of my brave men to go to be slaughtered."

The "Liberty Boy" was astonished, and disappointed. "Then you refuse to let the reinforcements go, sir?" he asked.

"I do. Arnold rushed hot-headedly into the affair; let him get out of it as best he can."

Of course, Dick could say or do nothing, and bowing and saluting, he took his departure.



He was eager to be with his "Liberty Boys."

He was not long in getting back to the scene of the battle.

He encountered Arnold, and told him what General Gates had said.

"And he refused to send the reinforcements?" cried Arnold, in a tone of mingled anger and amazement.

"Yes, sir."

An exclamation of anger escaped Arnold's lips.

"That beats anything I ever heard of," he said. "There are eleven thousand men up on the Heights, doing nothing, and if two or three thousand of them were down here we could defeat the British. It is the strangest thing I ever heard of—his refusing to let the reinforcements come."

"It is bad, sir."

"Yes, but we'll thrash the redcoats, anyway, unassisted, Dick. Come on; we will show Gates that we can do the work without help from him!"

Then he dashed straight toward the British at a gallop, waving his sword and crying, "At them, my brave boys! Kill the representatives of a tyrant king!"

Dick hastened to where the "Liberty Boys" were, and took command.

"Are the reinforcements coming, Dick?" asked Bob.

"No, Bob."

"Why not?"

"General Gates refused to let them come."

"Why did he do that?"

"I don't know."

"Jove, that's bad!"

"Yes, but Arnold says we'll whip the redcoats anyway, without assistance; so let's go for them, redhot."

"All right; I'm in for doing it, and so will the boys be."

Dick ordered the youths to follow him, and dashed forward, waving his sword and yelling, "Down with the king! Long live liberty!"

The "Liberty Boys" followed him with ringing cheers, and their example was followed by others.

It was a desperate battle, but the patriots were determined to win. The "Liberty Boys" were in the thick of the fray always, and they fought like demons, forcing the British back again and again.

It is probable that the patriots would have got the better of the battle had no reinforcements come to the aid of the British; but Riedesel, with his force, finally appeared on the scene, and attacked the patriots' right flank.

This, of course, was likely to turn the tide of battle against the patriots, but it was now nearly dark, and the patriots fought furiously, and the British could not drive them back.

It was a terrible scene, indeed.

The crashing of the musketry, the yells, groans, and shrieks was sufficient to make up a bedlam that was fearful to listen to, and the soldiers on the Heights listened with horror, and wished that they were down there, taking a part in the affair.

It was not their fault that they were not there. They would have been glad to have been there.

The battle raged till darkness settled over all, and made it impossible to see to shoot at each other, and then the patriots retired to the Heights, taking their wounded with them.

The British went into camp on the Freeman Farm, where the battle had taken place.

General Burgoyne called his staff officers together, immediately after supper, and they held a council.

He and his officers tried to reason themselves into the belief that they had won a victory, because they remained on the battle-field, but it is a matter of history that darkness stopped the battle, and that about an equal number of men were killed and wounded on both sides, the British losing as many as the patriots lost.

It would be hard to reckon this a victory for the British, then.

Burgoyne was not feeling in the best of humor.

He did not look like a man who had won a victory.

There was a frown on his face, and he could not but acknowledge that his plan of attacking the patriots had been spoiled utterly by the attack that had been made by the patriots.

They had not waited to be attacked, but had come down to meet him, and had made the attack.

"That fellow, Arnold, is a great fighter," he said, with a shake of the head.

"Yes; if the rebels had a few more such generals as he we would have a hard time thrashing them," said another officer.

"Yes, and if they had a few regiments made up of such fighters as are those young chaps they call 'The Liberty Boys of '76,' we would have hard work doing anything with them," said an officer.

"That's true, too," was the reply. "They are terrors in a fight, aren't they!"

"Yes; they seem to be very fortunate. A few of them went down this afternoon, but it was very few—not to exceed half a dozen, I am sure."

"You are right. It was not more than that."

"It proves what we have so often noticed to be the case, the bolder and more reckless soldiers there are on the battlefield, the less likely they are to be killed or wounded."

"That does seem to be the case," with a nod of assent. "I have noticed it many times."

Then the officers turned to the discussion of the question as to what should be done on the next day.

Of course, they thought that they would renew the battle in the morning, and their idea was to lay plans for the engagement.

While they were discussing the matter, the orderly came to the tent, and told General Burgoyne that a messenger wished to see him.

"Where is he from?" asked the general.

"He says he is from down the river," was the reply.

Burgoyne hesitated, and then said:



"Send him in."

A few moments later a man entered, and saluted the general and the officers of the staff.

"You are a messenger, you say, my man?" asked Burgoyne.

"Yes, sir."

"From whom are you a messenger?"

"From General Clinton."

This announcement caused considerable excitement.

Exclamations escaped the lips of the officers, and they stared at the messenger eagerly.

"What message do you bring?" asked General Burgoyne.

The man drew a goosequill from his pocket, and handed it to the general.

"There is the message," he said.

The general took the quill, cut it open, and on the inside found a message written on tissue paper, the same having been rolled up tightly and placed in the quill.

The crumpled sheet was spread out and carefully smoothed, and then the message was read.

"It is from General Clinton, sure enough!" said Burgoyne, "and he says that he is making arrangements to send an expedition up the river, to come to our relief!"

"That is good news!"

"Yes, yes!"

"That is the best of news."

"Will not this knowledge that has just come to us alter our plans, General Burgoyne?" asked one of the officers.

The general nodded.

"Yes," he said. "Instead of making an attack on the enemy in the morning, and continuing the battle, we will draw back, and wait. It will be our game from now on to kill time and wait for the arrival of the expedition that is to be sent to our aid by General Clinton."

"That will be the best plan," agreed one of the officers.

"Yes," said Burgoyne. "I wish I had known of this before we came over to the west side of the river."

"True, general. We could have remained quietly in camp, over on the east side, and would have been in no danger of being subjected to an attack; but here it will be different."

"Yes; we are likely to be attacked at any time."

"True; still, as we outnumber the rebels, I don't think they will be eager to make an attack, and if we hold off they will in all probability do the same."

"Quite likely. I certainly hope so."

The officers then discussed the matter for an hour or more, and made their plans.

It was decided to play a waiting game, and give General Clinton's relief expedition time to reach them.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### A WAITING GAME.

"They didn't thrash us, anyway, Dick."

"No; we gave them as good as they sent."

It was the morning after the battle of Freeman's Farm. The patriot army was at breakfast.

The "Liberty Boys" were eating and talking of the battle at the same time.

"What do you think, Dick—will the British make another attempt at attacking us to-day?" asked Mark Morrison.

"Hard telling, Mark, but I rather think they will."

"Let them," cried Bob Estabrook. "Just let them. We'll be able to hold our own, and maybe more."

"Yes, even down on the level ground, on even terms," said Dick. "And as for them storming the Heights—that is out of the question. They could not hope to do it successfully."

"I should say not," from Sam Sanderson.

"But, say, fellows," said Bob Estabrook, "what do you think of General Gates not sending the reinforcements when Arnold sent Dick up after them?"

"I think it was shabby treatment."

"So do I."

"I think that Arnold told the truth when he said that with two thousand more men he could have crushed the British center and beaten them, completely."

"I think so; we held our own even as it was, although they outnumbered us, too."

"So they did. They must have had a third more men than we did."

"There is no doubt regarding that."

"I tell you, General Arnold was mad!" said Dick, "and I don't blame him for being so. But we'll have to be careful how we talk, boys. General Gates is a man that would make things unpleasant for us if he knew we were criticising him and his actions."

"That's true, too; but it is hard to hold in when one is boiling over with a desire to speak," said Bob.

"It's always hard for you to hold in, Bob," with a laugh.

"Bosh! You're as much of a talker as I am, Dick," laughed Dick Slater good-naturedly.

"That's all right," he said, and then he added:

"I'll wager that General Gates and Arnold have said some warm words this morning."

"I'll wager the same way," said Bob.

"And so will I," from Mark Morrison.

"It won't do Arnold any good to quarrel with General Gates, though," said Sam Sanderson.

"You are right about that," agreed Dick. "But it would be some satisfaction to him to say what he thinks."

The prognostications of the "Liberty Boys" were correct.

General Gates and Arnold were at that very moment having a word-sparring match in the commander's room.

Arnold had gone there immediately after finishing breakfast.

He went right at the business at hand, and said bluntly, why the general had refused to send the reinforcements.



"Because I did not choose to do so," was the reply, with an assumption of dignity.

"That is a very poor reason for one general to give another for refusing to send reinforcements at a critical moment, and when said reinforcements would have enabled me to turn the tables on the enemy and defeat them completely."

"You could not have done this," said Gates.

"I say I could have done it!" said Arnold, hotly; "and I would have done it, too, if you had sent me two thousand men."

"You just think so, General Arnold," was the deliberate reply. "You over-rate your powers, which is a very common error of youth and inexperience."

Arnold glared at Gates as if he would like to wither him with a look, but Gates was the commander of the army, and knew his power. He was master, and was the kind of man to make use of his power.

He would not have cared greatly had Arnold struck him, he hated the young, daring officer, and would have been glad of a chance to arrest him, and have him court-martialed later on.

But Arnold, while hot-blooded and impulsive, had a good deal of cool common sense as well, and he was not going to place himself at the other's mercy by striking him.

"So you think that I am young and inexperienced, and do not know what I am talking about when I say I could have beaten the British, eh?" he asked, in a tone of repressed anger.

"I think that you are unduly enthusiastic, General Arnold."

"Well, I can only say that such an accusation could not with justice be brought against you, General Gates," was a sarcastic reply.

In spite of his efforts to prevent it, General Gates' face grew red.

The words of Arnold contained so much of truth that he could not but hurt.

General Gates was not famous for his enthusiasm when there was a battle in progress.

Indeed, some of the historians state that he was a man of extreme sedentary habits at such times.

Hence the thrust from Arnold went home.

"Do you mean to insult me?" spluttered the general.

"Oh, no," was the calm reply. "Of course, if you wish to construe my words, I cannot help it; but I had no intention, and cannot be blamed for your construction of my speech."

Well, you had better be careful how you address me, General Arnold. Do not forget that I am your superior officer."

"I am not likely to forget it, sir," was the cutting reply. "You make me remember it frequently—as yesterday afternoon, for instance, when I sent for the reinforcements and you refused to send them."

"I did the right thing in refusing, sir," growled Gates.

"You doubtless think so; of course, I would not say that you do not think so, for—you are my commanding officer. I beg leave to differ with you, however, sir. Had you sent the reinforcements we should easily have crushed the British center and beaten the enemy at every point."

"Bah! I do not believe it."

"Very well; but I am confident that I am right, and that you committed an error when you withheld the troops when I sent for them."

"See here, General Arnold," spluttered Gates, his face red with anger; "by what right do you criticise me, your superior officer? If you are not careful you will overstep your rights, and get yourself into trouble."

Arnold stood and looked steadily into the eyes of the other for nearly half a minute.

"General Gates," he said, "it is hard, very hard, for me to remain here and be under such a commander as you have proved yourself to be."

Gates was rendered furious by the calmly insulting voice and words of the other, and he roared:

"Well, you don't need to stay, sir! You may go, just as soon as you like. I don't need you."

"You mean that you don't want me," said Arnold, suavely. "I think you do need me, so far as that is concerned."

"Bah! You are too greatly impressed with a sense of your importance, General Arnold," said General Gates, "and I will prove that I do not need you by letting you go at once, if you wish."

"Very well," hotly. "Give me a pass, and I will return to West Point and leave you to win this battle with General Burgoyne by yourself and in your own way."

"All right, sir; you shall have the pass," and Gates sat down and wrote it immediately, and handed it to Arnold, who took it, pocketed it, and without a word turned and strode from the tent.

Arnold at once told the other officers of what had occurred, and that he was going to return to Washington's headquarters at once, but they persuaded him to not be in a hurry. They told him that he ought not to do this thing. He had been sent up there by General Washington to aid in bringing about the defeat and capture of Burgoyne's army, and it was his duty to remain, even though it was hard to do so.

At last, when they told him that it was his duty, he said he would remain, and he went to his quarters, feeling uncertain regarding his status. He did not know whether he was entitled to assume command under the circumstances, even though there was a battle at hand; he had a pass in his pocket, and he was not sure but that the acceptance of the pass was equivalent to resigning the right to command. Still, he decided to remain and await the trend of affairs and act as circumstances should direct.

"It had been supposed that the British would make another attack, on this morning, but the scouts sent out reported that all was quiet in the British encampment.



They were not stirring, or making any move toward getting ready to advance upon the patriot stronghold.

This seemed to be a rather strange state of affairs, the patriot officers thought.

They talked the matter over, and discussed it from many standpoints.

At last they gave it up, however; they could not figure out the meaning of the action, or want of action, rather, of the British.

It looked as though the redcoats had come to the decision that they had had all they wanted of fighting the day before.

The day passed, and the British had not made any move toward attempting to storm the patriot works.

"They must be up to some kind of a trick, however," said one of the officers. "Their inaction means something."

Others of the officers thought the same.

Next day the British were as listless and quiet as they had been the day before.

They did not seem to have any intention of renewing the conflict.

The patriots could not understand it.

They were suspicious, however; they believed that the enemy was busily engaged in laying plans, and that it would act presently.

So a close watch was kept upon the British.

A score of scouts were constantly out, watching the British from all sides at once, and noting everything that was done in the camp.

Patriot scouts stole through the timber like ghosts, so stealthy were their movements. They were equal to the red Indians in skill at this sort of work.

Many men were stationed in treetops, on the hillside, and they were enabled to keep a sharp lookout.

The second day passed as the first had, with no signs of activity in the British encampment.

The next day went in the same way.

The British seemed to have lost all interest in the affair; all they seemed to care to do was to sit around in the camp, and smoke and play cards.

And thus day after day passed. The British still remained quiet, and made no move.

The patriots could not understand it.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE SURRENDER OF BURGOYNE.

Two weeks passed, and things remained in much the same shape as they were the day after the battle of Freeman's Farm.

The British had made no move toward making another attack.

They had remained quietly in camp.

The patriots were puzzled.

They could not understand it.

Arnold was restless, and could scarcely contain himself. He fretted and fumed when among his friends.

He declared that Gates ought to make an attack on the British.

"I wouldn't let them stay there so quietly, and so much at their ease, if I was commander here," he said. "I would make things so lively for them that they would not have time to do anything save protect themselves."

The officers knew that Arnold was speaking only the truth.

Many of them would have been glad to have been sent against the British. Anything would have been preferable to sitting quietly on the Heights and waiting for—they knew not what.

Of course, the British were simply waiting for the arrival of the expedition which General Clinton was expected to send up the river to their relief.

They were killing time.

They were well pleased to be let alone.

That was what they wanted, and had they known about it they would have been very glad to know that General Arnold was under a cloud, and scarcely to be considered as having a command. They had great respect for the "fighting general," as they called him.

But things were coming to a head in the British encampment.

Their provisions were giving out, and they had no means of getting more.

Of course, they managed to secure a little in the way of provisions, by sending out occasional foraging parties, but this was only a drop in the bucket.

It takes a great deal of food to feed an army of soldiers, and the British would soon be suffering the pangs of hunger.

General Burgoyne watched toward the south, day by day, but no ships appeared in sight, and at last he decided that the expected expedition was not going to get there in time to keep him from being forced to make some decided move.

He called his officers together, and a council of war was held.

He laid the situation before them, and the matter was discussed thoroughly and from every point of view.

At last it was decided to make an attack. The time set for the attack was the next morning, which would be the 7th of October.

The plans were carefully matured, and it was decided that this should be a final desperate effort to defeat the "rebels."

The word was sent around to all the soldiers to be ready for warm work on the following morning.

General Burgoyne and some of his best officers, with fifteen hundred picked men, made an early start, when morning came, and they advanced with the intention of trying to turn the patriot left flank.

Their plan was discovered, however, and the patriots



met them, and engaged them in a hot fight. Morgan's riflemen, with three thousand New York militia, and also the "Liberty Boys," were the members of the force that met the regiment and a half of picked British soldiers, and the enemy was quickly hurled backward, and forced to retreat, in almost a demoralized condition.

Arnold had remained behind, watching the affair from the Heights, and now he saw that there was a chance to strike the British center a strong blow, and leaping upon a horse which had been brought by his orderly, he dashed down the hillside at a gallop, and headed for the scene of action.

General Gates told one of his under officers to stop Arnold, as he was likely to do something rash, but Arnold was too quickly away, and the officer could not head him off.

When Arnold appeared among his old soldiers they gave utterance to the wildest cheers, and followed him with resistless force, driving the British before them.

General Fraser, one of the ablest of the British officers, was killed by one of Morgan's riflemen, and this added to the demoralization.

Arnold and his men next attacked the Canadian auxiliaries, and put them to rout, and they threw themselves upon Breymann's force.

Breymann was killed, and his force was scattered and fled.

Just as Arnold was waving his sword and calling upon his men to follow him, for another dash at the enemy, a wounded German took deliberate aim, and fired at the officer. The bullet killed the horse and went through Arnold's leg, breaking it just above the knee.

One of the patriot soldiers was going to bayonet the German soldier, but Arnold cried out, "For God's sake, don't hurt him; he's a fine fellow!"

This saved the soldier's life, though there were many of the patriots who would have killed him without compunction, for they did not look upon him as being a fine fellow, even though Arnold seemed to think that such was the case. Arnold was such a brave man himself that he did not blame the man for shooting him.

It was now almost dark, and the fall of Arnold, who was the real commander on that day, and the rout of the British army, brought the battle to an end.

The patriot victory was complete.

Burgoyne had been utterly defeated and beaten on every side.

There was only one thing for him to do now. That was to retreat as rapidly as possible with his crippled army.

Next day the retreat began, and the British retired to Saratoga. They would have liked to have crossed the river, but the bridge of boats was gone; and besides, there were many patriot soldiers on the east shore of the river now.

Lincoln had come down from the north with a strong force, and hundreds, even thousands of patriots had flocked to the spot from beyond the New England line.

Burgoyne called a council of war that evening, and the affair was talked over at length.

It was plain that they were in a desperate strait.

There seemed to be only one thing to do, and that was to abandon the cannon and baggage and push northward through the timber in the night and cross the river opposite Fort Edward. At this point the river was fordable, and it seemed to be the only chance that remained to the British. If it failed they would certainly have to surrender very soon.

While they were yet deliberating, and laying out their plans, a messenger was shown into the tent, and he reported that the patriots were guarding the fords to the northward, and that strong forces had been stationed between Fort Edward and Fort George.

The British officers looked at one another in dismay.

"It looks as though we are doomed," said one.

"You are right. There does not seem to be much hope for us," said another.

"We are surrounded," said General Burgoyne.

"Yes, we will have to make such a stand as is possible, right where we are," said General Ackerly.

Next morning the patriots opened fire with cannon, and the sharpshooters kept busily at work also.

This was kept up for six days, and then, seeing that there was no possible chance for his army to escape, General Burgoyne sent a flag of truce to General Gates, asking on what terms a surrender would be accepted.

This was on the 14th of October, just a week after the second battle of Freeman's Farm.

General Gates sent Dick Slater out to talk to the bearer of the flag of truce.

"Tell him that I demand an unconditional surrender," said Gates.

Dick told the messenger, who went back to the British camp and told Burgoyne what the patriot commander had said.

"We will not surrender unconditionally," declared Burgoyne, angrily. "Go back and tell him so."

This was the beginning of the discussion as to terms of surrender, and it was kept up three days.

At the end of that time an agreement was reached. It was one more favorable to Burgoyne than it should have been, perhaps, and this was caused by the fact that Gates had learned that a force of three thousand British was coming up the Hudson, and had already captured a couple of forts down the stream. Of course, it was absurd to think that such a small force could have done anything serious, but Gates was a very careful man when danger of any sort threatened, and so he made easy terms for Burgoyne.

It was agreed that the British soldiers might march out of their camp with the honors of war, and after piling their weapons on the ground, were to be permitted to march across the country to Boston and embark on shipboard for England, it being understood, of course, that they were not to take part in the war again during its continuance. The British officers were to be permitted to retain their small



arms, and no one's luggage was to be searched or molested. Another peculiar feature of the affair was that the surrender was to be designated a "convention."

This was General Burgoyne's suggestion, and was agreed to, and the surrender has always been referred to by English historians as the "Convention of Saratoga."

Just after the agreement had been signed, a Tory spy managed to evade the patriot guards and enter the British encampment. He brought the news to Burgoyne that a British force was advancing up the Hudson. He did not know how strong a force it was, however.

The British officers at once held a council to reconsider the surrender. If a British force was close at hand, they might yet escape without surrendering.

The discussion was long and heated. Some favored repudiating the agreement, others were in favor of abiding by it, holding that they were in honor bound to do so. While they were in the height of the discussion a cannonball came down through the top of their tent, bounded over the table around which they sat, and went on out through the side of the tent.

It is said that his was taken as a gentle hint that it was not safe to delay too long in sending the agreement back to the patriots, and it was quickly despatched by a messenger.

General Burgoyne said that he did not think they were bound by the agreement, until after it had been delivered into the hands of the patriots, but that it was his idea that the British force coming up the Hudson—if any such were coming—would be inadequate to the work of freeing them from their peril, and that it was as well to surrender at once and have done with it.

On the 17th day of October the British marched out of their encampment, laid down their arms, and marched away to the river, where they crossed, and then heading eastward, marched toward Boston.

Thus ended the great affair at Saratoga. General Burgoyne and several of his staff officers went to Albany with General Schuyler, as that gentleman's guests, and remained there some time, being treated with all the courtesy and consideration that might have been shown dear personal friends. Burgoyne, when he returned to England, never tired of telling of this, and his admiration for the Americans was raised to the highest pitch by the kind treatment accorded him and his brother officers.

In the second battle of Freeman's Farm, as in the first one, Dick Slater and his "Liberty Boys" took a prominent part. They were everywhere, and followed Arnold in all his fierce dashes to different parts of the field. It was indeed due to the able seconding of his moves by the youths that Arnold in large part owed his great success on that day. The action of the "Liberty Boys" inspired others to like action, and the result was that the British were simply overrun and trampled under foot.

But Arnold was not given a bit of credit for the great victory which he won when Gates submitted his report of the battle to Congress. Indeed, Gates did not even men-

tion Arnold's name; but said that he (Gates) had done so and so, and had ultimately brought about the surrender of the British.

The people knew, however, and Arnold received—and has always received—the credit that was his due; the only pity is that he had not remained staunch and true to the end of the war. He was a brave man and a gallant officer, but he spoiled all at last, by turning traitor. He was not without some excuse for feeling hard toward Congress; true, but that does not excuse him for plotting to betray his countrymen into the hands of their arch enemy.

The "Liberty Boys" did not remain long at Saratoga after the surrender of Burgoyne, but went away, to seek for new fields whereon they might make themselves famous.

Four years later Dick Slater and Bob Estabrook were in that vicinity once more. They attended a wedding at the Folger farmhouse—the wedding of Joe Hunter and Bessie Folger. And at the wedding, one of the honored guests, was Harmod, the old hermit.

THE END.

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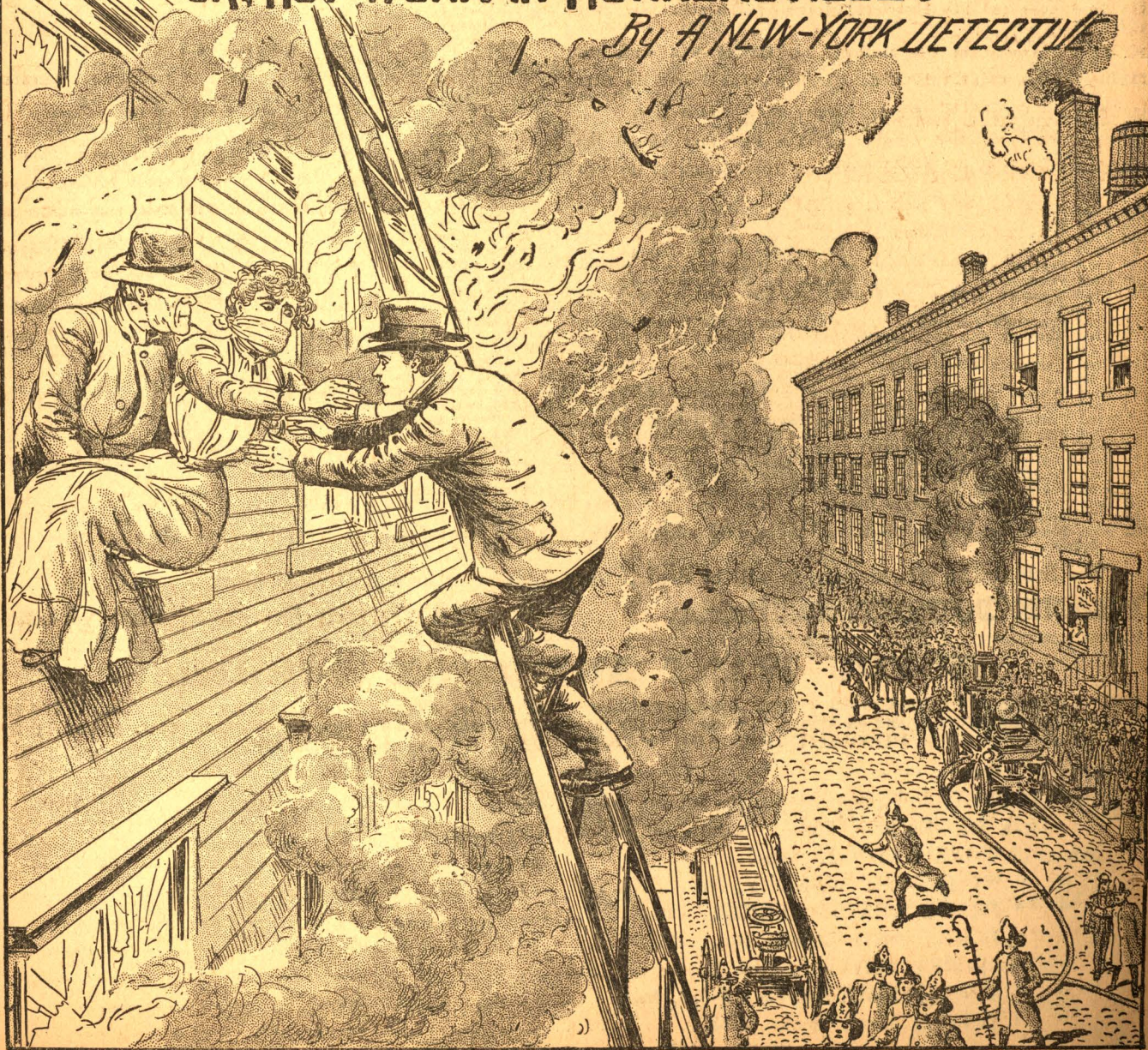
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